GUARDIAN WEEKLY February 4 1996

Football FA Cup: Reading 0 Manchester United 3

Big freeze fails to cool United's fire

David Lacey

THOSE scanning the icy wastes of the weekend's football programme for historical precedents will no doubt have noticed that when the FA Cup was severely disrupted in 1963 the trophy was eventually won by Manchester United.

Others, more intent on debunking history, may feel entitled to point out that in the season which has seen the fewest postponements since the second world war, 1947-48, the Cup was won by . . . guess who?

Either way Old Trafford has now reached a point roughly similar to that at which Ron Atkinson went out and Alex Ferguson came in. Once more the Cup represents the only tangible alternative to the league championship, hopes for which are fading fast.

Under Ferguson Manchester United may have won two league titles, as well as the Double, but it is a common law of football that the more a manager wins the more he is expected to win. A third FA Cup success for Ferguson would be a considerable feat in a season of transition, but for United a place in the Cup Winners' Cup will never be an adequate substitute for one in the Champions' League.

As a builder of confidence and character, however, the FA Cup is invaluable, and should United make their third successive appearance in the final this season Ferguson will regard it as an important staging post in the inevitable process of turning the team around. Last August, with Cantona suspended and Ince and Hughes sold on, few would have given much for United's chances of winning something.

Of course, the FA Cup could still prove United's Calvary this season, as it nearly did in the third round against Sunderland, who led at Old Trafford and Roker Park. Last weekend, however, less was left to chance.

Playing with more aplomb than hitherto, United continued their tour of the Endsleigh League's pre-Taylor museums with a 3-0 win at Reading which was never seriously in doubt once Giggs had snapped up a rebound nine minutes before half-time. A mishit centre from Parker, his first goal for three years, inadvertently increased their lead, and Cantona added a third in the penultimate minute.

Reading, guided by their 36-year-old player-managers Jimmy Quinn and Mick Gooding, worried United with inventive, imaginative football until Giggs scored.

The match was marred by an incident in which a coin thrown by a fan hit a linesman. If the Football Association feels inclined to rap Reading over the knuckles for the incident it should also commend the Elm Park groundstaff's efforts in getting the tie played at all. A mixture of sand and plastic sheeting had defeated the frost, and the only problem for the players was an uneven surface.

Ferguson told United to "be sensible, keep it simple and keep the ball ahead of you". He might have added, "If in doubt, watch what the opposition are doing", since common sense and simplicity were fundamental to Reading's early optimism, when a luckier rebound here and better contact there might at least have made the game more of a contest.

In the end the principal difference between the teams lay not so much in technique as in pace. "United have got so many good athletes," said Quinn afterwards.

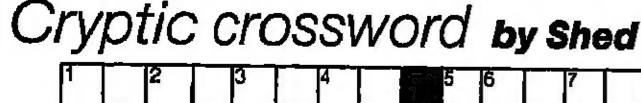
"The most dangerous moments for us came when our movements broke down in their box. Keane, Butt, Sharpe and Giggs could get the ball up the other end in a matter of seconds. And that French fellow wasn't bad either."

Though Reading reproduced the angles of pass and runs into space that had twice brought Sunderland within sight of a famous Cup victory, they did not have the change of gear which would have caused Bruce more problems. The Manchester United captain was solidity personified at Elm Park, but he was rarely tested for speed.

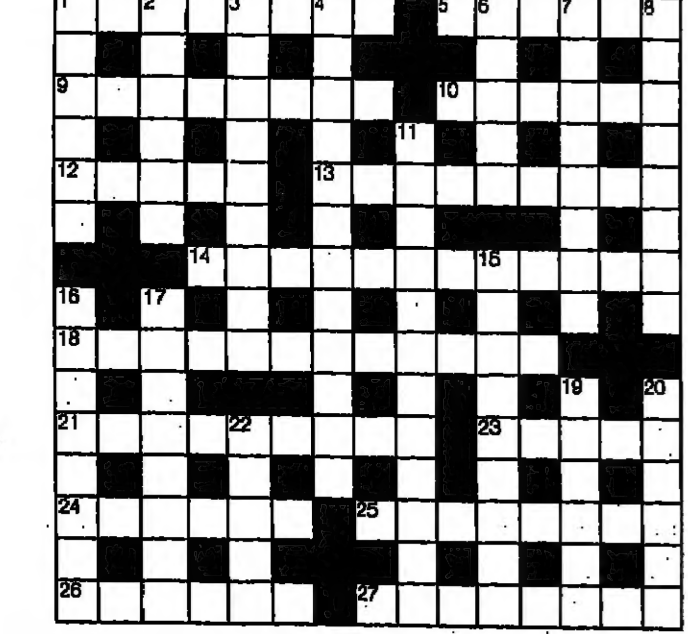
"I said before the game that Reading would win," Yuri Geller, Elm Park's resident celebrity, told Ryan Giggs, "but your talent overpowered my mind." Giggs looked blank and beat a hasty retreat before Geller could get on to the subject of bending free-kicks.



Star cluster: congratulations overflow for substitute Paul Parker (left) after scoring his first goal for three years and United's second in the cup tie at Elm Park PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS



Cryptic crossword by Shed



Across

1 Co-habitant's unqualified victory in chess (8)
5 Drive away, putting back records in cover (6)
9, 20 Firm smoother-out of fold by 6,10 (sic) (8,6)
10 It's by no means obligatory to turn on 26 (6)
12 Holy man took action about sportsmen (5)
13 The heavy smoker starts inhaling joints without satisfaction (9)
14 Rashly losing second precious stone in the balance (12)
18 In contact with the audience for 1dn (5-2-5)
21 Makes a new beginning, keeping dead birds (9)
23 Main character born to get the bird (5)
24 Storm about gold in plenty (6)
25 Being put in the picture regarding measurement (8)
26 Setback involving aficionado of Isis (6)
27 One willing to let fool take part (8)

Down

1 Stand up to welcoming notice by 10 (6)
2 Affair involving King's Defence (6)
3 Unrefined whisky swamping radio waves (9)
4 It helps cook to separate, introducing a piquant touch (8,4)
6 One in privy rising at 10 (sic) (5)
7 'Sorry I got in the way' and so forth (8)
8 Border guards turning printers' measures into cloth (8)
11 Love catching love in devious snares of starvation (12)
15 Spread round, scattering shot at full speed (9)
16 Startle properly with strident interruption (8)
17 Good girl — good grief! — has got sick (thrown up) (8)
19 Mount a painter, into what he's into (6)
20 see 9
22 Rushed to swallow first piece of treacle cake (5)

Last week's solution

E	T	H	I	C	S		A	L	G	O	R	I	S	M
D		O		L				E		F		M		A
A	B	R	O	A	D		S	C	R	E	A	M	E	R
M		A		U				T		L		E		C
	S	T	U	D	I	O	A	U	D	I	E	N	C	E
		I		I		R		R		A		S		L
T	W	O	H	U	N	D	R	E	D		W	E	A	L
U					S		E		H		S			U
N	I	B	S		O	R	G	A	N	P	I	P	E	S
I		U		S		A		L		Y		A		
N	O	R	T	H	E	R	N	L	I	G	H	T	S	
G		G		I		O				L		E		O
P	O	L	O	N	I	U	S		H	A	M	L	E	T
E		A		E		N				S		L		I
G	E	R	T	R	U	D	E		E	S	S	A	Y	S

American Football Superbowl XXX

Brown leads the stampede

DEFENSIVE back Larry Brown provided the inspiration as Dallas Cowboys beat Pittsburgh Steelers 27-17 in Tempe, Arizona to clinch their third Super Bowl in four years.

Brown was named the game's Most Valuable Player after making two key interceptions for the National Football Conference champions.

He found himself in the right place at the right time as the Pittsburgh quarterback Neil O'Donnell, under pressure, threw the ball right to the Dallas cornerback, killing the Steelers' threat of pulling off a comeback.

The Cowboys joined the San Francisco 49ers as the only clubs to win five Super Bowls and extended the NFC winning streak in the National Football League's championship game to 12 consecutive years. "It wasn't the prettiest game we've played, but our defence stepped up and made the big plays," said Dallas quarterback Troy Aikman.

The Cowboys' much-maligned coach Barry Switzer, under intense scrutiny for two years, was obviously elated and clearly feeling vindicated.

After accepting the Vince Lombardi trophy, Switzer turned to Cowboys owner Jerry Jones and screamed: "Are we having fun yet? We did it our way baby. We did it, we did it, we did it!"

"This one is sweet, they all are," said Cowboys star running back Emmitt Smith, who was held to just 49 yards rushing but scored touchdowns after each of Brown's interceptions.

The experts were predicting another Super Bowl blow-out, but after four consecutive lop-sided clashes, the Steelers made this one exciting. Pittsburgh, though trailing throughout, had seized the momentum and were very much alive until late in the fourth quarter.

They even looked as if they might win until Brown's second interception put the final nail in the coffin.

"Each week a different guy made the big plays. It's not surprising today it was Larry Brown. He bailed out my offence," said Aikman, who needed just two plays to score after each of Brown's pick-offs.

"After winning three Super Bowls in four years this football team has made a place in history," added the player who completed 15 of 23 passes for 209 yards and one touchdown.

The Steelers came alive late in the first half and had the edge in virtually every statistic except for turnovers.

"And that was what killed them — two interceptions by a quarterback known for accurate passes. — *Reuter*

The Guardian Weekly

Vol 154, No 6
Week ending February 11, 1996

The Washington Post Le Monde

Bomb aftermath . . . Dazed workers flee the scene of the Colombo blast in which 80 people died PHOTOGRAPH: ANURUDDHA LOKUHAPUARACHCHI

Tigers take revenge on Colombo

Suzanne Goldenberg

SRI LANKA paid in blood for its victories over the Tamil Tiger guerrillas as a devastating truck bomb tore through central Colombo last week, killing up to 80 people and injuring about 1,300 others.

Two Tamil youths reportedly confessed to helping the suicide bombers. The men, identified as Ragunathan and Kutti, were arrested as they fled the scene of one of the most devastating explosions in more than 12 years of a war which has made a speciality of terror.

They told detectives they were members of the Tamil Tigers, the guerrilla force suspected of carrying out the attack.

The Sri Lankan authorities had been expecting an attack on civilian targets in Colombo for more than a month, ever since the army inflicted its most serious defeat yet on the Tigers by ejecting them from their citadel in the northern Jaffna peninsula.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga said the bomb showed the rebels' desperation following their defeat. "This unfortunate incident has once again reminded us that the threat to Sri Lankan society by terrorism must be firmly dealt with," she said.

The blast is bound to bring further ruin to a country which has seen its economic fortunes plummet with the war. There were fears that the latest sign of the Tigers' deadly terror might scare away visitors.

The forthcoming cricket World Cup has been thrown into chaos as Australia and West Indies seem set on refusing to play matches in Colombo *(story, page 32)*.

Comment, page 10

Clinton called to testify in Arkansas trial

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

THE Whitewater affair reached new heights this week when a federal judge ordered President Bill Clinton to testify in a criminal trial investigating the scandal.

Mr Clinton was issued with a subpoena demanding he appear as the star witness in the trial of Susan McDougal, once his partner in the failed Arkansas land deal known as Whitewater.

If he complies, Mr Clinton will become the first sitting president to appear in criminal proceedings.

White House aides were swift to emphasise on Monday that the president has not been charged with anything and has been called merely as a witness for Ms McDougal, who faces conspiracy and fraud charges.

But the political cost for Mr Clinton is likely to be high, coming less than 10 days after his wife, Hillary Clinton, faced a four-hour grilling before the Whitewater grand jury in Washington.

Republicans are bound to seize on the image of a president forced to return to his home state to answer questions about the shady financial dealings that appear to have been rife when he was governor.

The trial is due to start in Little Rock on March 4 — in the middle of the Republican primary season, when the party chooses a presidential challenger to take on Mr Clinton in November.

Mr Clinton will reportedly seek to repeat Ronald Reagan's action during the Iran-Contra trial of the former national security adviser John Poindexter. Mr Reagan delivered a sworn deposition on video.

Right on in Dixieland, page 6

Africa's poorest trapped in war of mindless mutilation

Rebels and state troops butcher civilians rather than fight each other, reports **Mark Huband** from Bo in Sierra Leone

FRANCIS Momoh Sao stroked his cheek with his swollen stump of a hand. "It is everlasting punishment," he said. "The people came after midnight. One of the men ordered a boy of around 13 to chop me with a cutlass and he chopped off all my fingers. I can't do anything for myself now, even eat."

Mr Sao, aged 32, now lives with other displaced people near the central Sierra Leonean town of Bo, 150 miles east of the capital, Freetown. He seems obsessed with his hand, staring at it and trying to use it as if he had fingers.

Savagery has been dressed up as revolution by the rebels, the Revolutionary United Front. But the country's corrupt and inept army has done much the same, and civilians are convinced that the "men in uniform" who commit these acts could just as easily be government troops as rebels.

SENEGAL
THE GAMBIA
GUINEA BISSAU
GUINEA
Atlantic Ocean
Freetown
SIERRA LEONE
LIBERIA
100 miles

While everyone gossips about the coup last month, in which military ruler Captain Valentine Strasser was ousted by his deputy, no one seems to know if it is a good or a bad thing. What is certain is that the war, which has brought in four foreign armies, has united government soldiers, mercenaries, diamond dealers and gold prospectors in turning misery into profit and poverty into power.

Michael Sumaila is 27 years old and strong. His baby sister holds his knee tight where he sits on a wooden stool as he tells his story at his camp near Bo. "It was at Pelewahun where the rebels caught me. They told me to lie on the road and said they were going to cut my arms off. I never asked why. I just begged them seriously not to do it, but they told me they had to cut them. They refused my begging. The man with the machete came and he was instructed to cut my arms off.

"He cut the right arm twice and the left arm twice. I couldn't get up, and some other rebels came in and cut my back with a bayonet. Later my brother found me and brought me to the hospital."

Perhaps, but only perhaps, he is lucky to be alive. Barbarism has claimed at least 50,000 lives since 1991. Both "armies" run away when the shooting starts, preferring to maim defenceless civilians who can easily be accused of complicity with the opposing sides.

Sierra Leone is Africa's poorest country, but its mineral deposits mean it should be one of the richest. Nobody can explain why the war is happening. Ceasefires, like the one called last month, are only to allow rearmament. The rebels have no reasonable ideological goal.

In Freetown, the search for normality has thrown up the strangest rituals. In the dim light of a crescent moon, on a terrace at the dilapidated Paramount Hotel, the Freemasons of the Lodge Sapients wore black ties and toasted success as if there were no war. Outside, a million candles burned along roadsides where nobody can remember having electricity. The Freemasons ended with "Auld Lang Syne".

The war may as well have been 1,000 miles away, though the nearest victims are only a one-hour drive from the capital along roads which, when they are open, provide the only link between the self-styled grandees of Freetown and the peasants who scrape a living in what Sierra Leoneans pompously term "the provinces".

The violence began in March 1991 when the rebels' campaign was launched from Liberia by a British-trained army corporal, Foday Sankoh. The corrupt president, Major-General Joseph Momoh, preferred to steal rather than fight the rebels, and his duplicity resulted in the 1992 coup which installed Strasser, then aged 26.

Last month, it was Strasser's turn to be ousted. The leader, who had promised the army's withdrawal from politics in the presidential election on February 26, then tried to sneak into the contest as a candidate. But, instead of running for president, Africa's youngest head of state found himself ingloriously replaced by his deputy, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, who has professed commitment to civilian rule.

Within hours of the coup, the rebels declared a seven-day ceasefire.

Kono, 300 miles east of Freetown, produces up to $5 million worth of top quality diamonds every week. Production, possession and protection of that wealth determines the course of Sierra Leonean politics. Army rule has enriched the

continued on page 3

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3.000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Northern Irish elections could spell Major disaster

THE DISMAY with which republicans and the Irish government view John Major's call for elections in Northern Ireland should be shared whatever one's political sympathies (Anger greets Major's call for Ulster poll, February 4). Major must hope to benefit from the widespread view that democracy and elections must be synonymous. This is wrong, and especially so in the tricky case of political transitions.

Elections mirror existing divisions and views. But the reason people support peace processes is precisely to make it possible for them to change their minds. An election which reproduces old fixities can only hamper this attempt to create new fluidities. The point is not to count old allegiances but to make new ones. Negotiations, not elections, are the path which will eventually make consent in a divided society meaningful.

Major might retort that he is calling for elections only for party representatives to a negotiating forum, and that parties should have to legitimate themselves internally before going to the table. Yet elections would inevitably set parties at odds among themselves. The electoral battles and posturing of "normal" democracy have no place in the process of political transition where co-operation between parties is at a premium.
(Dr) Melissa Lane,
King's College, Cambridge

IT IS NOT often that I agree with John Major, but after 17 months of pettiness and stalling over the Northern Ireland peace process, I feel that all the main participants should be required to review their electoral mandate prior to all-party talks. Major's government, as the main player, should not be exempt from such renewal, especially in view of the gradual erosion of its mandate since the last election. Such a move would have the added advantage of quashing any rumours of a pact between the Conservatives and the Unionists, in order to maintain the Conservative majority in Parliament.
(Dr) A P Connor,
Oxenhope, West Yorks

SOME 20 years ago, as director of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission, I went with a group of prominent members of the community to meet the self-appointed Workers' Council. It was beginning a protest strike against what it saw as an attempt by the new power-sharing executive to railroad Ulster into a united Ireland.

So alarmed were we by the potential damage to the emergent executive that we tried to see the newly appointed Secretary of State at Stormont, Merlyn Rees. We were met by a senior official of the Northern Ireland Office who informed us that Mr Rees would have no truck with "thugs and bully boys". We sent a delegation to Westminster; the chief Labour spokesman on Northern Ireland refused even to listen to what we had to say. The rest is history. The strike became a province-wide shut-down and the executive fell. And now John Major has done it again. He has managed to antagonise not just Sinn Fein but the entire nationalist community and the Irish government. Having appointed a commission which came up with a formula to save faces all round, why did he not accept it?
David Rowlands,
Heworth, York

SELLAR and Yeatman in 1066 And All That wrote of Gladstone that "he devoted the rest of his life to trying to solve the Irish Question, but every time he got close to the answer the Irish changed the question". The case with John Major seems slightly different; he has also devoted the rest of his political life to trying to solve the Irish Question but every time anybody gets close to the answer he thinks up a new question.
Roger Crosskey,
London

Harman needn't apologise

THE LABOUR party is being far too pusillanimous over the issue of its leaders' children's schooling. Rather than apologising for Harriet Harman and Tony Blair sending their sons to private schools, they should be highlighting the devastation caused to the state system by Tory education policy. Their stance should be that since thousands of schools have been starved of resources, which have been channelled instead into the private system, Ms Harman is perfectly justified in choosing not to condemn her son to a sub-standard education. But when they gain power, Labour will restore equality of opportunity, thereby ensuring that her son would receive just as good an education in the state system.
Robert Heath,
Caracas, Venezuela

Iraqis have rights too

THANKFULLY Peter Pellett has had the courage to speak out from a position of direct knowledge on the results of economic sanctions against the Iraqi people (January 21).

Rightly or wrongly, the West has demonised Saddam Hussein. We live too far away from the Iraqi people to know whether or not the judgment is fair, but we are not too far away to know that the victims of the judgment are innocent children as well as decent Iraqi people.

The greatest hypocrisy of all is that governments which condemn others for lack of human rights are now depriving the conquered, including babies, of the right to live.

Shall we stand by and remain silent while this subtle "ethnic cleansing" takes place?
Elsie Tu,
Kowloon, Hong Kong

THE PEOPLE of Iraq have now suffered five years of sanctions as a means of bringing Saddam Hussein into line with UN directives. They have been starved; hospitals are desperately short of necessities; the infant mortality rate is the highest in the world and the exchange rate of the Iraqi dinar, which was once equal to £2, is now more than 3,000 to the pound. With most salaries still measured in hundreds of dinars, most people have resorted to trading all their domestic goods for a little food.

Despite all the predictions, Saddam Hussein is still firmly in place. The Western powers have not provided either moral or material support to any of the opposition groups in Iraq. Support of the Kurds in the north of Iraq would displease our Nato ally, Turkey, and support for the Shias in the south would frighten our oil-rich friends in the Gulf. It is now time for the UN to lift the sanctions against Iraq and allow free sale of its oil reserves. This need not mean opening the door for rearmament of Iraq as an effective arms embargo could prevent the sale of heavy weapons to Iraq.

Continuation of the sanctions will not force Saddam to heel as he can survive indefinitely on the limited trade now operating across the borders with Jordan and Turkey, but it will mean the deaths of thousands more innocent children.
(Dr) R Eccles,
Danescourt, Cardiff

The merry vibes of Windsor

PRINCE CHARLES'S call to celebrate the approaching new millennium is inspirational (The Week in Britain, February 4). He is in effect asking us to see it as an opportunity to reconsider the basic assumptions of the materialist world view that has prevailed in the latter part of the present millennium.

One such assumption is that all benefits are man-made — the product of science, technology and industry, ie, of economic development or progress, and made available via the market or by state institutions.

For politicians and economists who have been trained in these ideas, no value of any kind is attributed to the invaluable, irreplaceable services provided for free by the natural functioning of normal human families and communities. Nor is any value attributed to the equally invaluable and irreplaceable benefits, also provided for free, of the normal functioning of ecological systems — benefits that they are alone capable of assuring: the fertility of our soil, the replenishment of our water supplies and the stability of our climate. If no value is attributed to these critical benefits, it follows that we can annihilate them, as we are systematically doing today, with impunity.

Clearly a society that entertains such a dogma must be incapable of solving the ever more pressing problems of today. It must thus be a priority to reconsider it seriously as it must the other equally untenable assumptions that underlie the aberrant world view with which we have all been imbued.
Edward Goldsmith,
The Ecologist, Richmond, Surrey

THE PRINCE has reminded us that the choices of the new millennium are between a continuing slide into disintegration and conflict, and moving towards dialogue and harmony between people. He uses the word "hope" and correctly emphasises the need to talk of the "spirit" to challenge the oppressive sense of consumerist materialism that pervades society. He also lays out the welcome mat for the disenchanted among other religions. Those who quibble about the source of money to build a religious place of worship miss the point. If the idea is worthwhile, money can come from sources that are religiously acceptable.

I know of no public figure who has spoken on such a sensitive subject so directly from his heart. His appeal to create a caring, compassionate, multicultural society is something no one of goodwill or sense can argue with.
Akbar Ahmed,
Selwyn College, University of Cambridge

Briefly

DEREK MALCOLM'S review[...] three movies that are cent[red] on what he refers to as "purga[torial]" Las Vegas (Tut, tut for the [...]tat of Las Vegas, January 21) is [...] accurate in describing Las Veg[as] as is most Americans' belief that [...] Englishmen live in stately home[s].

Las Vegas is different, and as [a] girl growing up in Leicestershire [I] could not have imagined living here. But if Mr Malcolm had taken som[e] time to get off the "strip" he would have discovered a thriving commu[...]nity with a surprising range of at[...]tractions and opportunities.

Las Vegas is one of the fastes[t] growing cities in the United Stat[es] which indicates many people don't share Mr Malcolm's view. We m[ay] sometimes surprised with what w[e] find if we don't start with prec[on]ceived notions.
Jean Witmer,
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

THE REDUCTION by 3,000 [o]f the 40,000 prison workforce [in] Britain (3,000 jail jobs axed, Jan[u]ary 21) need not be a major pro[b]lem. The level of supervision co[uld] be maintained by releasing at the same time 3,975 of the prison po[p]ulation.

This would result in 6,975 mo[re] people to support the economic re[...]covery. Any increase in unemploy[...]ment would be soon balanced by the 100 per week increase in the prison population.
Geoff Bonney,
Sharqiyah, Sultanate of Oman

I WAS astounded to read (Fright[...] the opera, January 21) that the BBC was insensitive enough [to] broadcast, as part of their doc[u]mentary series on the running [of] the Royal Opera House, a st[aff] meeting in which highly critical re[...]marks were made about a member of staff working in the box office.

Has the much-maligned individ[...]ual concerned any legal redres[s] against the BBC, the Royal Opera House — or indeed the Guardia[n] Weekly?
James Chater,
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

ROBERT MILTON (February [...]) blames the current New Sou[th] Wales government for the fact that the new Governor will not occup[y] Government House (he has n[ot] been expelled from it). Has he con[...]sidered that perhaps the Governor's wife has refused to move into the isolated splendour of three rooms in the dowdy neo-gothic pile in the botanic gardens?

She might quite reasonably pre[...]fer to remain in her convenient and private newly-renovated house by the sea. Would the monarchis[ts] refuse her this democratic right?
Caroline Leighton,
Oatley, NSW, Australia



February 11, 1996 Vol 154 No 6

Annual subscription rates are £47 (United Kingdom); £52 (Europe inc. Eire); £55 (US[A] and Canada; £60 Rest of World.
Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Week[ly], 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3[...]
Fax: 44-171-242-0985 (UK: 0171-242 0[...])
e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk

Sierra Leone's secret war

Continued from page 1

officers. If they are content with their pickings, they may leave power and the war may end.

But greed is strong and the civilian voice is weak. Diamond mining restarted in November when the rebels were driven out of Kono by mercenaries of Executive Outcomes, the South African private army whose 300 troops are now sending the rebels packing in return for $30 million and lucrative diamond mining concessions. On December 29, the government diverted part of a $19 million International Monetary Fund grant to the mercenaries, when they threatened to leave as unpaid government bills mounted, three senior sources confirmed.

Liberation of the diamond area was explained as necessary to restart the war-torn economy. It has done nothing of the sort — only a pitiful amount ends up with the state. The rest enriches the junta, the mercenaries and the dealers.

Meanwhile, the southern bauxite and titanium mining region — which contributes 60 per cent of foreign exchange earnings to the economy, but from which the junta cannot earn quick profits — has been left with only the inept army in charge.

"It's bad government all along which has led to this situation. The rebels declared war against the government, but then they attacked the people," said Chief Henry Jusu, the pensive, troubled leader of 30,000 displaced people from the titanium mining region, now squatting in the picturesque southern coastal town of Bonthe. "We ran into the forest. We weren't safe. We went to camps. But we weren't safe there. The army ran away when they were supposed to protect us. The old people were killed. Young people were maimed or forced to fight with the rebels. But we don't know exactly what they are fighting for. They have lost sympathy for the people as they have become more wild and more vicious."

Twice in six months a barge has arrived in Bonthe from Freetown with United Nations food for the displaced. "The barge takes a long time because, before it's loaded in Freetown, it always has to have its holes mended," said Prince Tokah, a representative of Care International, which is distributing the food. "When it arrived last time, we had to negotiate with the military to allow it to land because mooring it near the gunboat is a security issue. Then the unloaders went on strike because they had not been offered food in return for the work . . ."

On and on he went, finding endless reasons why the victims of a pointless war should never be allowed to forget they are victims. Even displaced children there, deprived of education for nearly a year, are barred from the school because a government rule says class sizes should not exceed 40 pupils.

"They come and go, though," said Rose, the jolly proprietress of Freetown's quaint Café de la Rose, of the transient regimes.

Outside, the government was replacing old open drains with new open drains. A mangy, scabious dog cooled itself in a stagnant puddle before being chased off by a half-naked man who washed himself thoroughly in the same water.

"Momoh was too nice and Strasser tried too hard," said Rose with a heavy sigh. "So, God bless we." — *The Observer*

Open-air mass . . . Bosnian Catholics from opposite sides of the conflict gather in a gutted church on the former front line in the Sarajevo suburb of Stup. The church held its first mass in more than three years as the Bosnian government reasserted its authority throughout the capital PHOTO: DANILO KRSTANOVICZ

French silence Serb snipers

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

NATO'S first lethal action by ground troops, in which a Serb sniper was tracked and killed last week, was a covert operation by French special forces with a point to prove.

French soldiers stationed in Sarajevo felt guilty for having failed to prevent a Serb grenade attack on a tram on January 9 in which a civilian was killed, or to find the perpetrators. So when Nato vehicles came under fire in the Serb suburb of Ilidza, their commanders sent an élite team of soldiers to hunt the sniper.

"From our point of view, we failed over the tram incident. We felt we couldn't fail this time," a French officer serving with Nato's peace implementation force (I-For) said. "We had people who passed some days and nights out there waiting for someone to show himself."

From ballistics reports on I-For vehicles hit in Ilidza, the French narrowed down the likely source of gunfire. By last week they had focused on an abandoned factory near the main road from Ilidza to Sarajevo.

"At 6.20 in the evening the teams saw unusual activity in the building. Action teams worked towards the building. Other teams provided cover, watching with night-sights," the officer said.

When a figure raised a rifle, one of the action teams opened fire, hitting the sniper in the stomach and arm. He was taken to a French field hospital but later died, becoming the first person shot dead by I-For troops since they arrived on December 20.

Nato sources said the sniper was armed with a high-velocity rifle with a telescopic sight. A second man with a rifle was arrested on the spot and handed over to the Bosnian Serb police after questioning. The sources would not say what was learnt from the interrogation.

Both men were wearing a combination of civilian and military clothing and were carrying Bosnian Serb military identity papers. But Major Simon Haselock, a Nato spokesman in Sarajevo, dismissed the possibility that they were part of an organised military operation. "The most likely theory is a rogue group of people who lost control," he said.

French military sources said a third suspected sniper had escaped, but Nato spokesmen said they were aware of only two gunmen.

Ilidza lies in a swath of Serb land around Sarajevo which was due to be transferred to government rule at the weekend, but where Serb police are staying on. About 15,000 Serbs have already left, refusing to accept a Muslim-led government, and many more are expected to go in the coming weeks.

The aggressive response almost certainly took the gunmen by surprise. French anti-sniping teams deployed as part of the UN peacekeeping force could open fire only if snipers shot first. Commando raids were ruled out by the UN's rules of engagement.

● The Bosnian government has arrested a Serb general, a colonel and six other men for investigations into suspected war crimes in a move that will infuriate the Bosnian Serbs.

Nato said the ground forces commander, Lieutenant-General Michael Walker, was told of the arrests by the Bosnian interior minister, Bakir Alispahic.

It said Bosnian Serb authorities had raised the issue at a meeting of Nato and military commanders from the two sides in Sarajevo on Monday.

Mr Alispahic said Bosnia had informed the war crimes tribunal in The Hague of the arrests and asked the tribunal to question the men this week.

Land decree threatens Brazil's indigenous

Jan Rocha in São Paulo

THE Brazilian justice minister, Nelson Jobim, could prove to be as deadly to Brazil's Indians as General Custer was to North America's.

He has changed the rules of the government's indigenous land rights policy, giving squatters — loggers, miners, ranchers, small farmers — as well as local authorities, the right to challenge reserve areas and claim compensation. The indigenous population see it as the biggest threat to their survival since the Portuguese landed almost 500 years ago. Overseas agencies who have funded projects to protect indigenous populations are demanding explanations.

These include the G7's Amazon Rainforest Conservation Programme, which has a $20 million component specifically for the demarcation of indigenous areas, and the World Bank's Planaflora project, which provides funds for the demarcation of 14 indigenous reserves in the Amazon state of Rondonia.

Capoib, Brazil's biggest indigenous organisation, wants the international agencies to suspend these payments unless the government repeals Decree 1775, which changed the rules. They fear it will be seen as a green light for more invasions.

The decree could put 344 out of the 554 indigenous reserves up for grabs. For Amnesty International, the decree paves the way for invasions with massacres, selective killings, and abductions to follow. The Brazilian ambassador in London dismissed this as "over-reaction".

For the anthropologists at the Socio-Environmental Institute in São Paulo, the government's aim is to reduce the size of the indigenous areas. Covering 11 per cent of Brazil's territory, mostly in the Amazon basin, and containing valuable mineral deposits and mahogany reserves, they are coveted by developers.

Defending the new decree, Mr Jobim says that at any moment the Supreme Court could have declared previous legislation unconstitutional, creating confusion. In fact, in the only case of its kind, the Supreme Court threw out an attempt to challenge the previous law in 1992. The lawyer who brought the case was none other than Jobim.

The final arbiter for challenges will no longer be the judges of the Supreme Court, or the technocrats at Funai, the national indigenous affairs agency, but the justice minister. To make sure that challenges are not lacking, he is reported to have sent a letter to at least one state governor, advising the best way to do it.

China army fuels a war of nerves

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

IN ITS fiercest display yet in an escalating battle of nerves with Taiwan, China has reportedly massed up to 400,000 troops in a coastal area newly designated a "war zone" prior to a massive, month-long military exercise.

As fear of the People's Liberation Army again jolted Taiwan's stock exchange, its president, Lee Teng-hui, said this week that Beijing's war games showed the Communist party is "scared to death" of the island's burgeoning democracy.

Military sources confirmed troop movements in Fujian province facing Taiwan in preparation for large-scale exercises of PLA ground, air and naval forces.

An unconfirmed report in Hong Kong's Sing Tao Daily said China would deploy 300 warplanes, 20 élite infantry units, submarines and missile-bearing boats. It quoted an unnamed Chinese official saying any interference by Taiwanese ships or planes would make a clash "difficult to avoid".

China's manoeuvres, expected to start this week, provide a menacing counterpoint to campaigning in Taiwan for elections at the end of March.

"March 23, 1996, is an important day in Chinese history because it is the first time the country holds democratic presidential elections," President Lee said on Sunday in Taipei. "The Chinese communists are scared to death of this historic event."

Beijing sees the poll as a ploy to perpetuate Taiwan's status as a separate political entity and has denounced President Lee as bent on pushing it towards independence. It hopes military threats will hurt Mr Lee's chances of victory, or force him to abandon efforts to increase Taiwan's international profile.

But Fredrick Chien, Taiwan's foreign minister, seemed to rule out any retreat. "The efforts will not be thwarted by media diatribe and military intimidation by Chinese communists," he said.

A new study of the PLA by the Stockholm International Peace Institute doubts whether China has the capability to launch an effective assault. However, political uncertainty has sparked fears that the imperatives of internal power-struggles could override military logic.

The tension is causing deep unease in the United States. The Washington Post reported that US officials had decided to formally warn China that "heightened tension could lead to miscalculation and accident". But there is no sign that Washington is ready to spell out what a policy of so-called "strategic ambiguity" might mean in the event of conflict.

● Chinese troops searched for survivors in freezing darkness at the weekend after a powerful earthquake killed at least 240 people and left 3,800 seriously injured in a scenic mountain region popular with foreign backpackers. The earthquake measured 7.0 on the Richter scale.

Worst hit were villages around Lijiang, a town in China's south-western Yunnan province noted for its spectacular scenery, cave art and ancient relics.

Comment, page 10

The Week

ANTONIO MACCANICO, a 71-year-old former bureaucrat, has been asked to form a broadly-based government in Italy with a brief to keep the country ticking over while politicians try to agree on reforming the constitution.

THE United States has given a grant of $2 million in humanitarian assistance to communist North Korea which, according to the Clinton administration, is experiencing widespread food shortages and malnutrition.

RUSSIAN union leaders called off their pit strike at the weekend after the government promised $125 million in back pay and a $2.25 billion subsidy for the industry.
Washington Post, page 13

CONFUSION reigned in Guatemala after the government said a man was shot dead as he tried to kill President Alvaro Arzu on the eve of Pope John Paul's visit.

THE GREEK government, facing public indignation at Washington's role in defusing the row with Turkey over a disputed Aegean island, forced the US assistant secretary of state, Richard Holbrooke, to cancel his forthcoming visit.
Le Monde, page 17

CLAUDE GUBLER, the Paris doctor who breached state secrecy by writing a book about President François Mitterrand's health record, may be struck off by the French Medical Association.

TAJIK government troops pushed back a mutinous army force that had advanced towards the capital, Dushanbe, to press demands for the dismissal of the government of the central Asian former Soviet republic.

SHOPS and markets in the Guinean capital Conakry were bare on Sunday after a frenzy of looting by mutinous soldiers demanding better pay and rations. Up to 40 people were killed and dozens wounded in the looting and clashes between the mutineers and troops.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL said it received many reports in the last 10 months of German police beating up detained foreigners, and demanded an investigation.

NIGERIAN and Cameroonian troops fought on disputed islands in the Bakassi peninsula and several soldiers were killed on both sides.

THE United Nations secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, warned that an unprecedented cash crisis could shut down the organisation.
Washington Post, page 13



Words of wisdom . . . A man studies the Koran in the 1,000-year-old Azhar mosque in Cairo before breaking his fast at sunset during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan PHOTOGRAPH: MOHAMED EL-DAKHAKHNY

Kohl warns Britain on Europe's future

John Palmer in Brussels
Larry Elliott in Davos
and Michael White

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl issued a veiled warning to the British government last week that it should not try to deflect other European Union countries from moving ahead to monetary and closer political union.

His remarks will be seen as a direct rebuke to senior British figures, including the former Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, who have asked Germany to propose postponing the planned move to a single currency in 1999.

In an address at Louvain University near Brussels, the German chancellor served notice that the pace of European integration would not be set by those who wanted to slow progress to closer union.

Mr Kohl said the single currency project was going through "a period of uncertainty" but he insisted that "the policy of European integration actually comes down to a question of peace or war for the 21st century". He stressed that: "It is no use following the ostrich policy."

The chancellor did not mention the British government by name, but it was clear whom he had in mind. "During the next few years we will have to prove that a viable Europe can be built with 15 and more states," he said. "The slowest ship in the convoy should not be allowed to determine its speed. If individual partners are not prepared or able to participate in certain steps towards integration, the others should not be denied the opportunity to move forward."

At the weekend, Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, upped the stakes by bracketing the single market with the achievement of monetary union by 1999. "We will spare no effort to see that it is achieved. But if it isn't, it will be a great step backwards, and I don't know whether the single market would suffer such a blow".

Sir Leon Brittan, the EC vice-president, strove on Sunday to defuse the increasingly fraught single currency debate when he rejected Mr Santer's claims that the failure of monetary union could threaten the survival of the single market.

After a weekend in which the risks of postponing or abandoning monetary union have been one of the main talking points at the World Economic Forum, Sir Leon said Brussels had always viewed the single market and the single currency as separate entities. "Those countries who don't participate in the single currency, either because they don't qualify or choose to use their opt-out, are fully entitled to the benefits of the single market," he added.

Amid jitters over Mr Kohl's warning, repeated in Munich at the weekend, the British Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, said in Davos that the nation state — as opposed to nationalism — still had "a very important" part to play. "Nation states and nationalism are not the same thing. And what we're looking for is the way in which nations can collaborate together more and more," he said.

British ministers are increasingly confident that the Euro-sceptical tone adopted by the British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, will help them weather the forthcoming Maastricht review without a split. Mr Portillo also rejected Mr Kohl's suggestion that Britain was "the slowest boat" in Europe.

So did Mr Rifkind. But Britain's EU allies remain suspicious. Mr Santer's theme was taken up by Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Belgian prime minister.

"If you don't maintain that integration process, you will have the reverse — disintegration", Mr Dehaene said. Without monetary union even the single market would not hold, he added.

The interventions of both Mr Santer and Mr Dehaene were seen as evidence of concern that the Maastricht timetable will be deferred until 2002 to allow more countries to meet the convergence criteria.

SA school in court for barring blacks

David Beresford in Johannesburg

A PROVINCIAL government in South Africa is due to take a local primary school to court this week to force it to admit three black children under the country's non-racial constitution.

The Northern Province announced last week that it would be lodging an urgent application with the supreme court for an order forcing the all-white Potgietersrus primary school to open its door to blacks. The move came after parents of children at the school voted to defy the government on the issue.

"We want the court to rule that the school's action is unconstitutional and that they have to admit blacks," said a spokesman for the provincial administration, Jake Mokobi.

A confrontation between parents and the regional government blew up last month when a group of parents wearing the khaki dress of rightwing organisations blocked the school entrance to stop a father delivering his three children.

"God warns us in the Bible about mixing races," a local newspaper quoted a parent as saying. "Under no circumstances will my children mix with blacks."

But Danie Bisschoff, a lawyer representing the school, insisted that the black children were only refused admission because of a shortage of space. "The black kids are not the issue," he said. "The school couldn't allow white kids in either because there just isn't room."

But the government spokesman insisted there was room for the three black children. "It's a disguise for crude racism," he said.

The extra-parliamentary Conservative party, which is strong in the area, is attempting to exploit the clash. It described the incident as a "new awakening by Afrikaners" and appealing to whites elsewhere to "emulate the courage" of the Potgietersrus parents and "follow the same path of resistance".

Greece gets back piece of history

Helena Smith in Athens

GREECE is poised to renew its campaign to retrieve the Elgin Marbles after succeeding in getting a hoard of priceless Mycenaean treasures repatriated from the United States.

This small piece of Greek history arrived back at the weekend, after years of "blood curdling" adventure, according to Greece's new culture minister, Stavros Benos. "This is a major triumph, not only for Greece, but for all countries seeking the return of cultural property," he said.

Few Greeks have heard of the stolen Aidonia Treasures, but their return from Washington is due to be marked this week. No pomp will be spared as the collection of rare and ancient gold jewellery and ornaments is welcomed in the capital.

Mr Benos, who has assumed the post most famously held by the late actress Melina Mercouri, will have "Elgin's loot" uppermost on his mind as he presides over the fanfare.

"The return of these wonderful pieces will most certainly strengthen our demand for the Parthenon marbles," Mr Benos said. "It shows that Melina's dream, which everyone thought utopian, can be realised. We will get the marbles back from the British Museum."

Mr Benos has none of Mercouri's fiery passion or glamour. But like his friend and predecessor, he has made the repatriation of the 75m-long, fifth century frieze, metopes and figures a personal "mission".

"The days of 'no, no, no' are over," said Eleni Cubitt of the London-based British Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon marbles. "Even those who were opposed to their return now realise the arguments they used are no longer valid."

The repatriation of the Mycenaean treasures, which include ornate rings, necklaces, glass beads and sealstones, ends nearly two decades of thievery, crooked art deals and unprecedented legal action.

Birthplace of Buddhism's founder traced to Nepal

John Ezard

BUDDHISM'S counterpart to Christ's stable has been discovered in south-west Nepal, an international team of archaeologists announced on Monday.

They said a stone buried on a platform of bricks 5m under a temple marked the place where Prince Siddharta Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was born 2,600 years ago.

The team said the relics were under the Mayadevi temple in Lumbini, 300km south-west of Kathmandu. The platform dated from the era of Emperor Ashoka, who ruled much of the subcontinent.

The archaeologists — from Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Japan — said they made the discovery nine months ago, but the government delayed making an announcement until it had finished consulting experts.

Some scholars claim the Buddha was born in northern India. But the prime minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, said the identification was reliable. "The discovery proves that Lord Buddha was born at this sacred place."

Buddhist literature says the Buddha's mother, Queen Mahamaya, dreamt in 623BC that "a white elephant, beautiful as silver" entered her womb through her side. On her way to her parents' home, she passed through what was then the park of Lumbini. She went into labour, bathed in a sacred pond and walked 25 paces to give birth.

According to this account, Emperor Ashoka placed a stone on bricks at the birthplace, and a pillar which still stands.

Iraqis celebrate in advance of UN oil talks

David Hirst

IRAQIS were queuing in Baghdad last week desperate to sell hoarded dollars and buy dinars, as the national currency staged a spectacular rise and the cost of food plunged.

Bank employees said they were collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars every day. Their reserves of hard currency have never been as high since coffers started depleting under pressure from United Nations sanctions, imposed on Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Some people queued all day but were unable to exchange their dollars, as banks ran short of dinars.

For ordinary Iraqis, the turnaround is the most sustained and dramatic in the bleak era that began with the Gulf war.

The Iraqi currency's spectacular recovery began after Baghdad agreed to enter talks with the UN on selling limited amounts of oil to buy urgently needed food and medicines. The talks were to begin this week.

Under UN resolution 986, Baghdad is entitled to sell $1 billion worth of oil every three months for buying food and medicine to be distributed to the people under UN supervision.

President Saddam Hussein had been considering this for some time, after arguing for years that supervised oil sales were an infringement of sovereignty.

When he solemnly announced the oil-for-food talks to the people — on January 20 — the effect was immediate. Celebratory gunfire echoed around Baghdad and, by the end of the day, the currency was rising. Instead of costing 2,620 dinars to buy $1, it cost 2,000. By last week, the official rate was 800 and strengthening.

Last month, in the wake of the announcement, joyful people descended in such numbers on the Shorja souk, Baghdad's traditional food market, that traffic came to a standstill. Musicians struck up, and the crowds danced as women handed out pastries.

"Thank God," said an old man in tears. "We are going to eat again, and all will go back to what it was."

The value of the dinar is the chief yardstick of Iraq's fortunes. Before the Gulf war, one dinar fetched $3.20. It is still far from that, but is now 300 per cent stronger than before President Saddam announced the talks. Prices of food and basic commodities, such as rice, vegetable oil and sugar, have fallen by up to 50 per cent. This is true bounty in a country where a civil servant's entire official salary buys 24 eggs.

The strategy of hope carries high risks for President Saddam. The negotiations will be fraught with political and technical difficulties and there is no guarantee that the UN deal will go through.

If agreement is reached, that will almost certainly strengthen the Iraqi leader in the short term. The celebrations proved that. But the longer term is different.

"I think the people will start demanding more and more, and the Americans will capitalise on this to wring more and more concessions from him," an Iraqi exile said. "In any case, it is hard for him not to accept now. Can you imagine the people's reaction if prices jumped again to where they were — and probably much higher still?"

Jailed Ogonis plead for help

Chris McGreal in Port Harcourt

NINETEEN Ogonis facing trial and the gallows for allegedly participating in the same murders for which Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other men were hanged in November have smuggled a letter out of prison pleading for the Commonwealth to secure their freedom.

The appeal, headed "SOS" and signed by all 19 men, is addressed to a Commonwealth ministerial delegation appointed to urge Nigeria's military regime to restore democracy and respect human rights.

"We are hereby calling on you all, through your offices and humaneness, come quickly to our aid and save our lives — cause our freedom, for we have suffered a lot," says the letter, handwritten on a page torn from an exercise book.

The 19 Ogonis are held in harsh conditions at Port Harcourt prison. They are split between severely overcrowded cells, each with dozens of inmates. All sleep on the floor. They are let out for a few minutes each morning to wash from a bucket in a neighbouring field. Family visits are allowed once a month, but are more frequent if bribes are paid. Payment is also expected for food. Malnourishment and disease are common among the prison population.

"We are grossly underfed coupled with the complete lack of medical care. As a result we are becoming malnourished and anaemic. These conditions have contributed to the death of one of us," the letter said. Clement Tusima died last August from untreated diabetes, according to Amnesty International. The mechanic, aged 40, was taken briefly to hospital and chained to the bed, but he was returned to prison where he died.

Lawyers say the men's best hope is that the regime will not risk further international condemnation and will put the trial on hold indefinitely.

Meanwhile, posters threatening the life of the exiled Nigerian Nobel literature prize winner, Wole Soyinka, have been plastered across Lagos two days after a government minister implicated him in bomb attacks.

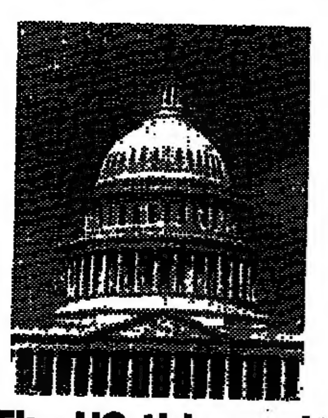
The posters, signed by "committed patriots", denounce opponents of the country's military dictator, General Sani Abacha, including the National Liberation Council of Nigeria (Nalicon) led by Professor Soyinka.

The threats come amid rising paranoia within the regime since the recent death of Gen Abacha's son in a presidential plane crash, and bomb explosions in the northern cities of Kano and Kaduna.

● The publisher of the Guardian, Nigeria's leading independent newspaper, has survived an attempt by gunmen to kill him, the paper said at the weekend. It said Alex Ibru was shot in his car in Lagos last week by unknown assailants.



Dixie resounds to far-right rhetoric



The US this week

Martin Walker

THIS publication goes to press before the registered Republicans of the state of Louisiana go to their unfamiliar caucus rooms for their first early primary. But even before the results are known, some striking developments became plain.

Because the traditional first primary states of Iowa and New Hampshire vowed vengeance on any politicians who dared run in Louisiana, this became the rightwing primary. Senator Bob Dole ducked, so did Steve Forbes, and the field was left open to Pat Buchanan and Senator Phil Gramm. And in the new Republican party of the South, conservative can be very rightwing indeed.

Thanks to cosmetic surgery, the former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan is the image of any conventionally handsome American politician as he inquires, politely, whether the nefarious cunning of the latest Jewish plot has yet become obvious to the visitor.

"The Jews have to stop Pat Buchanan, you see. Pat wants to stop all foreign aid, which means all the $5 billion a year that we give to Israel," says David Duke, the former Nazi who is now a kingmaker in the new Republican party. Duke is not a candidate in the presidential primary, but he is running again for the US Senate in November. He got 45 per cent of the vote last time he ran, and more than 60 per cent of the white vote, so he is not to be lightly dismissed.

Louisiana Republicans joke that theirs is the Redneck primary (after the nickname for working-class whites of the Deep South), to pick a suitably reactionary presidential candidate. Its enemies might call it the Brownshirt primary. After all, the candidates cite similar metaphors from Berlin in the thirties — not least when they turn from the conservative hinterlands of Louisiana to the Weimar on the bayou that is the great city of New Orleans.

"Homosexuality is not a civil right," according to Buchanan. "Its rise almost always is accompanied, as in the Weimar Republic, with a decay of society and collapse of its basic cinder block, the family ... Amidst the moral crud of the Weimar Republic, the Nazi bullies must have had a certain appeal."

It is a great irony that this conservative battle is anchored on New Orleans, the louche and relaxed city whose nickname is the Big Easy.

There are three candidates running in Louisiana. There is the very conservative senator from Texas, Phil Gramm, who has the backing of the state's party hierarchy and is the favourite. Traditionally one of the most rightwing figures in US politics, who boasts that "I was a conservative before conservative was cool", in this race he is the moderate. His main rival is the rightwing firebrand and TV talk-show host Pat Buchanan, who is being strongly supported by Duke, although Buchanan insists, "I did not solicit his backing". Buchanan is seeking support in the vast evangelical churches of the suburbs, with congregations of 10,000 and more. They are filled with religious conservatives, where the preachers denounce the wickedness of Washington and the evil of abortion, and Buchanan's "America First" rhetoric is greeted with Hallelujahs.

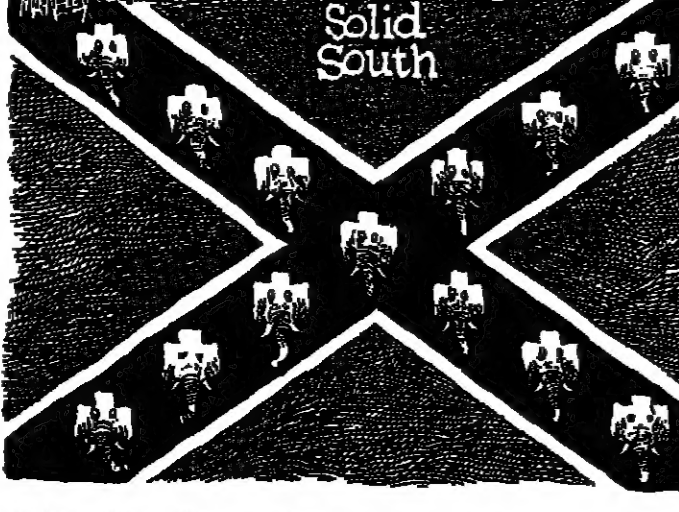
And then there is Alan Keyes, a black conservative, who is so passionately opposed to abortion that he wears in his lapel a golden badge depicting two tiny feet, the exact size of those on a 12-week-old human foetus.

"Every issue in American life, from our crime rates to our taxes, from our schools to our economic prospects, comes down to one core moral crisis, the collapse of the American family, the abandonment of our children, and the cult of devaluing human life, which starts with the sin of abortion," says Keyes.

Keyes, who was a medium-ranking state department official in the Reagan years, with the courtesy title of ambassador as the US representative at a United Nations agency, is a captivating speaker. But he has no serious political organisation and little prospect of winning. His purpose, Keyes says, is to force the electorate to address his arguments about abortion and the family.

"Alan Keyes is the Jewish plot," says Duke. "Did you know his college room-mate at Harvard was William Kristol, who then became chief of staff to Vice-President Dan Quayle? Did you know that Kristol was campaign manager for Alan Keyes when he ran for the Senate in Maryland in 1988? Kristol is running Keyes like a puppet to take Christian votes away from Pat Buchanan because the friends of Israel have always hated Pat."

Indeed, Buchanan opposed the Gulf war and condemned "Israel's Defence Ministry and its Amen corner in the US" for dragging the



country into Desert Storm. Buchanan has expressed public doubt about the Holocaust, has insisted that the Catholic church "has nothing to apologise for" over its relations with Jews, and has embarrassed most of his friends on the right with his fervent admiration for Hitler as "a man of great courage and extraordinary gifts".

Last weekend, Buchanan was doing what he does best, sitting before a microphone with the TV cameras rolling, making the outrageous sound reasonable as he assured the listeners of WTIX that there are "no exceptions" in his opposition to abortion. "Even if that pregnancy is the result of rape, you don't kill the innocent baby. If we are going to kill someone, let's kill the rapist," suggests the most conservative of presidential candidates.

This was not Buchanan's usual perch at the CNN studio in Washington. We were in a suburban radio station in Louisiana, and the TV cameras had gathered because of the sudden and startling prospect that Buchanan could be about to pull off another upset and emerge the winner of the Louisiana primary, just as he won the Alaska primary last week.

Buchanan's Southern strategy hinged on the two burly figures flanking him at the microphone, the men who put him within striking distance of another unexpected success in Louisiana. They embody that biblical phrase about rendering unto God and rendering unto Caesar. Retired policeman Irving Magri stands for Caesar and the Reverend Bill Shanks speaks for the fundamentalist Christians of the South, and they share Buchanan's uncompromising and devout conservatism.

Shanks runs a church called the New Covenant Fellowship, one of the inter-denominational and fundamentalist groups that is spearheading the explosion of evangelical Christianity in central and South America and elsewhere. Shanks is just back from celebrating the opening of their 50th church in Russia.

"We know that everything that ails us is because we have departed from the principles of the Bible," he says. "Pat Buchanan is a messenger for those principles, and I firmly believe he has a very good shot this year at winning the White House."

Shanks's church shares with its affiliate churches their own TV channel and radio station, on which the sermons and the services are interspersed with Buchanan's speeches and interviews and his promises to "get back to those fundamental rules of life we find in the Bible".

"I do believe you have a heart for God, Mr Buchanan," says the woman called Stacey, phoning the radio show to promise her own vote. "Just like the Bible says in Romans 13, you are a minister of God for good."

WTIX is not a religious radio network. It is the vehicle for Magri, whose "Crimefighters" organisation of 4,000 members rivals the churches as Buchanan's secret political weapon in Louisiana. Magri has invented a new kind of radio. He sends members out in the back seat of police patrol cars with a cellular phone. Whenever there is an arrest or an alert, the phoned report goes out live on air, the squealing car tyres and the gunshots, the interview with the arrested suspect and with the cops. In between the action, Magri rails against "the liberal pointy-headed judges who let criminals walk free because a cop who has just been dodging bullets maybe didn't read out the suspect's rights slowly enough".

The Louisiana primary is a brand-new event, devised by the old state Republican machine to deliver 21 guaranteed delegates and an early victory to their friend and neighbour, Senator Gramm of Texas. But Gramm has disappointed the religious right by telling them he wants to be "a president, not a preacher", and by voting to approve President Clinton's two nominees to the Supreme Court. He also, some 20 years ago, made an incautious investment in an X-rated movie called Truckstop Women. And the party machine is now run by a new governor, Mike Foster, who is backing Buchanan in the primary, and who, like Buchanan, was also backed by Duke.

THE winner of the Louisiana primary can expect to become the standard-bearer for the conservative cause, and can expect to win the votes of all 15 Southern states. That means sufficient delegates to be more than halfway to a majority at the Republican convention in San Diego in August which will pick the party's presidential candidate. Gramm and Buchanan had originally assumed that the winner of Louisiana and the rest of the South would then battle directly with Senator Dole for the nomination. Now, their pulses beat even faster at the prospect of Dole and Forbes exhausting each other in a fight to the death in the North.

"This is turning into a very favourable circumstance," says Buchanan. "Steve Forbes is a social liberal who agrees with Bill Clinton about gays in the military and does not want to upset his New York friends by opposing abortion. Bob Dole has never been a real conservative. While they wipe each other out in the North, I'm taking Louisiana as a springboard to the rest of the South."

Buchanan has always suspected that he could do better in Democratic primaries than in Republican ones. His visceral populism is attuned to the blue collar vote. And down here in the Louisiana bayous and in the fundamentalist churches of the New Orleans suburbs, Buchanan is beginning to think this could be his year.

But there is another winner in all this, as the Rednecks and the fundamentalists and the crimefighters, and even the odd brownshirt, take over the Republican party. Not only are they fighting on Duke's turf, but they are also echoing his ideas. Buchanan and Gramm are each campaigning on Duke's old cause, that the first priority is to scrap all laws that give blacks any advantages in getting jobs or education.

"I may have lost battle after battle. But when I look at the issues that now define the Republican party, from welfare reform to immigration, from English as the official language to stopping discrimination against white people, I think I can say I won the war," says Duke.

Democrat's victory throws Dole into despair

THE bitterly divided Republican party, which lost a Senate seat to the Democrats in a crucial byelection last week, has mounted a desperate drive to draft the retired and unwilling General Colin Powell back into the United States presidential race, *writes Martin Walker*.

President Clinton and the Democrats were celebrating their first triumph at the polls for more than three years — the Senate byelection in Oregon triggered by the resignation of the Republican senator Bob Packwood after accusations of sexual harassment.

The Democrat, Ron Wyden, won by a 1 per cent margin, despite being outspent by $5 million to $3 million by his Republican rival, and despite his decision to eschew "negative campaigning" and personal attacks.

President Clinton hailed the victory as proof that "the tide is turning" against the Republicans. The Democrats' last good electoral news was Mr Clinton's election in 1992. They lost New York and Los Angeles in 1993, and lost control of both houses of Congress in 1994.

The result was a setback for the religious right wing, which had strongly supported the Republican.

Senator Robert Dole, whose decline in the polls means he can no longer be dubbed the Republican frontrunner, has reportedly had one meeting and several telephone calls with Gen Powell, hoping to lure him on to a joint ticket with offers of a co-presidency.

That, at least, is the claim of senior Republicans, including the former Pentagon assistant secretary in the Reagan administration, Frank Gaffney, and the conservative Washington Times. The Dole camp denies the offer of a co-presidency, but not the meeting or the telephone calls.

The Republican right wing is alarmed enough at the prospect of Gen Powell — with his liberal views on abortion, welfare and civil rights — to start firing warning shots against him.

"It is important for whoever is the party's nominee to choose a running mate who unites rather than divides the party," Christian Coalition director Ralph Reed said.

But Mr Dole is desperate, seeing his last chance at the White House crumbling. Between the New Hampshire primary on February 20 and the California primary five weeks later, a decision should be made on who will challenge Mr Clinton.

Pushed into second place in some New Hampshire polls by the multi-millionaire publisher and political novice Steve Forbes, Mr Dole was voted into a humiliating third place by Alaska's Republican activists last week.

The Week In Britain James Lewis

Students set political poser

THE GROWTH in the number of school-leavers going on to higher education — up in eight years from 14 per cent to 31 per cent — has been one of the Conservatives' more enduring achievements, particularly during John Major's premiership.

Employers, backed by most universities, would like to raise the target to 40 per cent, similar to America. But the costs of expansion have exceeded what the Government is willing to pay, so the concept of "free" university education has effectively been abandoned.

Tuition costs are still free, and some students get a small grant towards books and living costs which they can top up with a low-interest loan, repayable after graduation. But there has also been a widening gap between the subsidies paid to universities and the costs of providing tuition. To plug it, vice-chancellors last week threatened to make students pay an "admission fee" of about £300.

Mr Major angered the vice-chancellors by claiming there was no excuse for such a levy, and there were good grounds for suspecting that the vice-chancellors' threat was, in reality, a device to force the Government, and other political parties, to face up to the problems of university funding. They have since backed away from the levy in the face of opposition from politicians, parents and students.

An extension of the student loan scheme, repayable through a form of graduate tax (as in Australia) or through income tax or national insurance (as in Sweden and Germany) seems inevitable. A Government plan along these lines was expected to be announced this week.

The Government's plan would aim to release the £1.7 billion spent on student financial support — about 30 per cent of the higher education budget — to boost funds for teaching and research, which universities say have reached crisis point.

The Liberal Democrats will unveil a similar policy later this month, though Labour is still shy of committing itself to anything that could cost it votes at a general election.

An unhappy fact which the Government prefers not to admit is that a degree is no longer a passport to a job. Barring a major upturn in the labour market, many student loans will remain unpaid.

Comment, page 10

LABOUR had good grounds for crying "We told you so" when the rail privatisation programme got under way in earnest. The handover of the London-Southend-Tilbury "misery line" to LTS Rail — one of three franchisees due to start operating last Sunday — was put on hold because of a fraud investigation (into an alleged failure by LTS to hand over a proper share of ticket revenue to the publicly-owned London Transport).

The Government conceded that an inquiry might force it to withdraw the licence from the present holders, Enterprise Rail, and hold a second round of bidding for the franchise. The sum involved, around £30,000 a month, was "not particularly large", said the junior transport minister, Steven Norris, when he greeted the dawn of a "bright new railway future".

It was not a particularly bright beginning for passengers (now customers) on the other privatised routes — South West Trains and Great Western who encountered delays, missing buffets, bus journeys to bypass engineering works, and confusion over ticketing and timetables.

It was not too difficult to believe British Rail's departing chairman, Sir Bob Reid, when he spoke of the "nightmare" of a once-national rail service operated by 25 competing companies intent only on maximising profits.

Keith Harper, page 12

FLEUR LOMBARD, who was 21, became the first female firefighter to die on active duty when the roof of a burning supermarket in Bristol collapsed after she went inside to check for trapped people. She was one of only a handful of women who have taken the opportunity to become firefighters since Britain allowed them to serve on active duty in 1982.

The tragedy followed the deaths, two days earlier, of two part-time firemen who went into a burning house in South Wales to look for a child mistakenly reported to be trapped inside. A boy they had earlier rescued also died from smoke inhalation.

There are 14,792 part-time firefighters in rural areas of England and Wales. They are paid a retainer of £1,500 a year, plus a minimum £11 for a call-out. Their trade union fears that many will now quit because of changes in benefit rules. Retained men who are unemployed can, under present rules, keep their unemployment benefit and income from firefighting. Later this year they will only be allowed to keep £15 before losing benefits.

WATCHING or following a person could become a criminal offence under proposals being examined by the Home Office. This follows the rape of a woman under police "protection" by a man who was said to have stalked her for five months.

A few weeks earlier, an over-zealous policemen had arrested an admirer of the Princess Royal, who followed her around the country and sent her love letters, but magistrates found he had committed no offence.

Stalkers can be prosecuted if they are deemed to pose an "overt threat". Ministers are considering whether to extend that to cover people who do not create such a threat but still distress their victims by their presence. An alternative could be to prosecute for "intentional harassment" under the latest Criminal Justice Act, though this provision was principally aimed at racist behaviour.

THE FILE on one of Scotland's biggest murder mysteries was reopened when Strathclyde police exhumed a 15-year-old corpse from a Lanarkshire grave to carry out DNA tests which, they hope, will prove it is the remains of a serial killer known only as "Bible John".

One man was thought to be responsible for strangling three young women picked up in a Glasgow ballroom between February 1968 and October 1969. Though never traced, he was nicknamed Bible John because of his fondness for quoting Old Testament scripture.

DNA samples from the body of John Irvine McInnes, who killed himself in 1980, will be compared with semen stains found on Bible John's last victim, Helen Puttock.

If police suspicions are proved to be right — it will take three weeks for scientists to establish whether he is guilty of murder or not — it will put an end to 26 years of speculation and scupper a book, about to be published, which points to a different suspect altogether.



Academic uproar at book publication ban

Leonard Doyle

CAMBRIDGE University Press is refusing to publish an important new work on Greek anthropology following advice from the security services and the Foreign Office that publication could provoke a terrorist attack against Cambridge University staff in Greece.

The decision has provoked outrage and incredulity in academic circles and is expected to have wider repercussions for the CUP's reputation as an academic publisher. The editorial board for the CUP's anthropology series has resigned in protest and leading academics are warning that the Press's 40-year history of publishing important works of this kind could end if authors turn instead to US publishers.

The book, entitled Fields Of Wheat, Hills Of Blood, deals with the thorny issue of Macedonian identity. It is an ethnographic study of villages in northern Greece which contradicts the official line that there is no Slavo-Macedonian minority in Greece.

In tendering his resignation, Michael Herzfeld, the British-born professor of anthropology at Harvard University, said censoring the book "represents an unacceptable restriction of academic freedom", which would damage the Press's reputation and implicitly insult the Greeks by presuming to censor on their behalf.

The decision to pull the book at the last minute followed an extraordinary request by senior officials at the CUP in Cambridge for a "terrorist threat assessment" by officials at the British embassy in Athens and from its chief salesman in Greece, Craig Walker. No Greeks were consulted, nor were the views of the British or US academic experts canvassed. The CUP's actions are also understood to have been motivated by fears of a boycott affecting a lucrative market for its books and revenue from setting some 300,000 English exams in Greece every year.

The Greek-born author, Anastasia Karakasidou, received death threats two years ago for publishing her research on the Slavic speakers of Greek Macedonia, raising issues central to Greece's dispute with the neighbouring former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia. Her researches revealed that there were villagers in northern Greece who speak a Slavic tongue and consider themselves culturally "Macedonians".

Internal CUP documents reveal the Press was so concerned about the risk of "terrorist violence" that it felt there was a "moral imperative" not to publish. In a memorandum dated January 12, a CUP executive, Jessica Kuper, stated that "it was impossible to discount the advice received from the British embassy in Athens" which had "warned that publication might put at risk the lives of Press staff in Athens, and of Cambridge University personnel in Greece".

When a committee of senior Cambridge University academics (known as the Syndics) met on December 1, 1995 to decide what to do, they were told that MI6 was worried about the possible effects of publication on Greek public opinion and the risks to British interests. They were reminded of a handful of attacks on British interests in Greece including the murder of a British Council official in the 1980s.

The Foreign Office says it never advised the CUP not to publish but that "we were asked a difficult question and we gave an honest answer which we stand by".

Gulf war illness review

David Fairhall

THE Ministry of Defence has launched fresh research into the mysterious Gulf war syndrome, bowing to pressure from veterans who fear it may be causing deformities in their children.

A statistical survey will be made to check whether certain illnesses are abnormally prevalent among the veterans, and there will be studies of three conditions — birth defects, chronic fatigue syndrome (better known as ME), and groups of medically unexplained symptoms. The research is expected to take two or three years, funded by the MoD and overseen by the Medical Research Council.

The symptoms veterans complain of include chronic weakness, depression and loss of memory. The main suspected cause is interaction between the cocktail of vaccinations and anti-nerve gas tablets (NAPS) given to troops who served in the desert campaign.

Among the 37 nations taking part in Operation Desert Storm in 1991, only American, British and Canadian troops have complained of widespread illness, with a few cases also reported from Norway. The Americans and Canadians took the same NAPS tablets as the British.

The armed forces minister, Nicholas Soames, denied his department had been forced to change its approach by public criticism and the threat of veterans' legal action.

"This is not a U-turn. It is the orderly, progressive result of three years of scientific work." The minister pointed out that an RAF physician, Wing Commander Bill Coker, began examining sick veterans in October 1993.

However, there is no doubt that the MoD was deeply stung by the Commons defence committee's condemnation of its assessment programme as "hopelessly inadequate", and alarmed by the 70 cases of veterans' children born with major abnormalities, such as missing limbs, identified by lawyers seeking compensation for them.

● Military volunteers in experiments at the Porton Down chemical warfare establishment have lodged a complaint with the European Commission of Human Rights which could open the way to large claims for compensation against the Ministry of Defence.

The complaint is in the name of Michael Roche, aged 57, of Rochdale, Greater Manchester, a former soldier in the Royal Engineers, who was used to test samples of mustard and nerve gas in the early 1960s and now believes his ill health can be traced back to Porton.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY February 11 1996

Ashdown in arson attack

Geoffrey Gibbs

SURVEILLANCE on Paddy Ashdown's home is to be stepped up after a concerted campaign of threats against his property culminated in a firebomb attack last week which destroyed his car.

Police arrested three men, aged 18, 19 and 21, in connection with the attack. All three are from Yeovil, in Mr Ashdown's constituency.

It emerged before the arrests were made that anonymous telephone threats had been made to Mr Ashdown's property and London office in the past few weeks. There were no threats to his life, but the calls were being taken seriously.

Mr Ashdown has played a much publicised role in exposing a spate of racist attacks on the tiny ethnic community in Yeovil, which is the third largest town in Somerset. But police played down suggestions that the "despicable" attack which destroyed the MP's car was racially motivated.

A newspaper on Monday apologised unreservedly for publishing untrue allegations against Mr Ashdown, after he issued a libel writ over what he called "an utterly disgraceful" article.

Under the headline "Sex Smear on Paddy", the Western Daily Press had repeated allegations said to have been made against the MP by Peter Stoodley, former owner of a Yeovil massage parlour closed down by the Liberal Democrat district council two years ago.

On Tuesday the newspaper said it accepted "that those allegations are completely untrue".

Last month Mr Ashdown's car window was smashed with a stone in what is believed to have been a linked attack.

In December, during a late night fact-finding tour of the town with a priest on behalf of the newly formed Partnership Against Racial Harassment in Somerset, a knife was allegedly drawn against the MP only yards from his constituency offices.

MPs lobby for pay rise

Michael White

THE latest backbench campaign to raise MPs' pay backfired last week amid furious denunciations of political insensitivity from poverty lobbyists and disaffected voters.

Downing Street reacted warily to the motion, signed by nearly 300 of the 651 sitting MPs, to refer the hyper-sensitive issue of their own and ministerial pay to Lord Nolan's committee on standards in public life but revealed that the Leader of the Commons, Tony Newton, has already begun an investigation. The issue could also be passed to the Senior Salaries Review Body.

The row re-opened the issue of outside work done by some MPs. Unions said it was astonishing that while workers' pay was going down, MPs were trying to raise their own salaries, and poverty campaigners, angry at years of ever-lower wages for the unskilled, protested that MPs were trying to cocoon themselves from reality.

What prompted grassroots anger was the way the motion was presented as a demand for a near-doubling of the current £34,085 a year, a claim being privately advanced mainly by Tories feeling the post-Nolan squeeze on outside earnings.

Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown both stressed the importance of having an independent mechanism for indexing MPs' pay to an outside group. But the Liberal Democrat leader said that he was happy with the present level, while Mr Blair's office said: "Higher pay for MPs is not a priority for an incoming Labour government."

Allowing for inflation, MPs' pay has been static for 30 years while average pay has risen by 80 per cent, Sir Terence Higgins, spokesman for the campaign, stressed.

Scargill crushed by Labour

Patrick Wintour and Martin Wainwright

ARTHUR Scargill's Socialist Labour Party appeared close to still-born last week after it narrowly avoided losing its deposit in the Hemsworth byelection, polling less than 5.5 per cent in one of Yorkshire's strongest mining areas.

Labour, cutting the overall government majority in the Commons to four, retained the seat with an impressive 71.92 per cent share of the vote, an increase of 1 per cent on its share in the general election. The Conservatives remained in second place with the Liberal Democrats third.

The turnout of 39.5 per cent was one of the lowest for a recent byelection, reflecting voter apathy, the cold and the brevity of the campaign.

A defiant Mr Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers and agent in the campaign, claimed the result was a remarkable success for his fledgling party.

He said: "To describe this result as miserable is deplorable. To nearly equal the Liberal Democrats when we did not launch the party until May is remarkable. Five per cent is excellent. We did not lose our deposit. A century ago Keir Hardie lost his deposit and went on to form a mass party and the rest is history."

In the 1992 general election, Labour won the rock-solid seat with a 22,075 majority taking 70.8 per cent of the vote. Last week its majority of 13,875 was described by the shadow chief whip, Donald Dewar, as excellent. The overall swing was 5.4 per cent from Conservative to Labour.

Labour described the performance of the Socialist Labour Party as derisory and proof that Mr Scargill was a pinprick. Although 35-year-old Brenda Nixon, a locally popular member of Women Against Pit Closures, had stood as the new party's candidate, Mr Scargill acted as agent, grabbing all the publicity in the process.

John Prescott, the deputy Labour leader, said the Hemsworth result revealed the depth of unpopularity of the Conservative government.



Labour's Jon Trickett, who won the Hemsworth byelection with an increased majority PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

The victorious candidate hailed his increased majority as an endorsement of Blair's leadership. "Hemsworth now stands totally behind Tony Blair's drive to modernise Britain. Hemsworth has spoken for the nation."

● Labour last week jettisoned its policy of all-women shortlists after lawyers warned it could not risk an appeal that might leave as many as 70 parliamentary selections in limbo right up to the general election.

The move follows the recent industrial tribunal ruling that the policy, aimed at increasing the number of Labour women MPs in the House of Commons, breached Britain's sex discrimination laws. The NEC has agreed not to appeal against the ruling, on the basis of legal advice.

The NEC was also warned that if it appealed and lost the legality of the 35 selections already made from all-women shortlists would be jeopardised. As it is, the 35 women candidates in Labour target seats are regarded as legally unaffected, virtually ensuring an unprecedented boost to Labour's 39 women MPs.

Sweet smell of success

BRITAIN'S DIY spaceman Steve Bennett trounced sceptics and vindicated years of lonely struggle last week when his sugar-powered rocket, Starchaser II, soared 1,890 feet up over the Northumberland moors, *writes John Ezard*.

It did not reach 3,000 feet as he had planned. "My computer projections must have gone astray," he said. But it sent his reputation into orbit and set a record as the largest airworthy home-made rocket in Europe.

Putting a rocket into orbit is Mr Bennett's next project. His triumph follows 17 years of misfires and jokes. Even his wife Adrienne used to tell onlookers at his launches, echoing Corporal Jones in Dad's Army, "Don't panic. If the rocket's parachute should fail, keep watching it and run as fast as you can."

Now the way is clear for Mr Bennett, a 31-year-old laboratory technician from Greater Manchester, who tests toothpastes and soap powders, to aim at becoming the second designer to send a British rocket into orbit. He is in an international race with amateurs striving to put their craft the 50 miles into space needed to reach orbit. To do this he will build a new rocket, Starchaser III. His eventual ambition is to launch himself into space.

In his two dozen rocket launches so far, Mr Bennett, who was inspired by the Thunderbirds, has spurned the liquid oxygen fuel often used by amateur rocketeers. All he will disclose about his own is that it is "sugar mixed with other chemicals".

His sponsors for the last year, the sugar multinational Tate and Lyle, were delighted at his proof of their slogan Out Of Sweetness Comes Forth Strength.

The 21ft rocket was cheered as it rose from a pad in a glow of fire against the snow-covered hills round Otterburn military training area before vanishing into clouds. Then it split in to two pieces which parachuted back to earth.

The flight was to test propulsion systems, parachutes and on-board computers.

Cabinet may sacrifice Lyell to Scott

Richard Norton-Taylor and Michael White

THE Cabinet is preparing to sacrifice the Attorney-General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, in order to cling on to William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, in the expectation of damning criticism in the long-awaited Scott report on the arms-to-Iraq scandal.

Mr Waldegrave this week protested his innocence following further leaks of Sir Richard Scott's draft report accusing him of misleading Parliament over the sale of arms to Iraq. "If I'm fired then I'm fired. But I know in my heart I have not done anything wrong," he said.

As Labour warned against a damage limitation exercise designed to let ministers off "scott-free" it was increasingly clear that Sir Richard's report will leave Sir Nicholas particularly exposed on the most politically sensitive charge.

Reports on Sunday highlighted Mr Waldegrave's vulnerability as a foreign office minister in the late 1980s when arms sale policy towards Iraq was changed without Parliament being told.

Sir Richard is likely to confirm this, although the final report may have toned down the criticism.

Sir Nicholas is widely seen in Whitehall as the man most likely to have to go in the light of his role in the 1992 prosecution of three directors of the Matrix Churchill machine tool company. Had the trial not collapsed it could have led to the businessmen being wrongfully imprisoned.

Sir Nicholas conceded to the Scott inquiry he had "overall ministerial responsibility" for the Treasury Solicitors' Department, which is expecting fierce criticism of the way it handled the prosecution.

Labour has challenged the Government to explain its arrangements for publication of the long-awaited report on the arms-to-Iraq affair, amid signs that Whitehall is planning an extensive news management exercise.

Robin Cook, shadow foreign secretary, said it was important "that the public have a chance of a fair and open presentation of the report. Ministers must not be the only people who have the chance to prepare their response before publication."

Ministerial efforts to minimise the impact of the report were apparent last week when it emerged that no advance copies will be available for reporters to digest before its release at 3.30pm on February 15.

To provide it with legal immunity — thus protecting Sir Richard from libel actions — the report will be published under the rarely used Parliamentary Papers Act of 1840.

The report will be sent in advance to what was called "ministers with policy responsibilities and officials who have to offer advice on the contents."

Mr Cook said the report should answer two key questions: "Did the Government permit arms exports to Saddam Hussein while keeping Parliament and public in the dark? And did it gag evidence to protect the national interest or to save themselves from political embarrassment?"

He added: "If the report justifies the departure of government ministers the real test for John Major and the integrity of his Government is if he will ask them to resign."

However, the bulk of the report is believed to amount to an unprecedented indictment of the way Whitehall works, its attitude towards Parliament and the conduct of government lawyers.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY February 11 1996

In Brief

BRITAIN'S largest charity for the disabled admitted to covering up 10 years of child abuse at one of its schools. Mentally and physically disabled children were sworn at, denied food and physically mishandled at a school run by Scope, formerly the Spastics Society, near Leeds.

A COMMITTEE of MPs is to investigate whether the Child Support Agency should be transferred to the Inland Revenue to strengthen its powers to collect a backlog of unpaid maintenance approaching £1 billion.

A MAN with a history of mental illness who knifed 15 women in a department store was given 10 life sentences. The day before, a mentally ill man who killed two people while on home leave from a mental hospital was sentenced to six terms of life imprisonment. Mental health campaigners said the policy to send mental patients to prison rather than to secure hospitals signalled a loss of faith in the ability of psychiatric services to deal with violent offenders.

THIRTEEN Labour councillors were banned from holding political office for a minimum of two years, after a party investigation found there had been mismanagement at Monklands council in Scotland.

SARAH COOK, the 13-year-old Essex girl who went through a marriage ceremony last month with the 18-year-old boyfriend she met on holiday in Turkey, was reported by Turkish television to be six weeks pregnant. She is on her way home.

A FOX slaughtered the Queen's flamingos in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. The lake had frozen over, allowing the fox to cross to the compound in the middle of the water.

A FORMER Royal Artillery major, Jimmy James, has been chosen as Tory candidate for the Staffordshire South-East seat, vacant since the death in December of Sir David Lightbown. The byelection may be held next month.

MILLIONAIRE zoo-keeper John Aspinall won his fight to allow his keepers to enter the tiger cages at his private zoo. Canterbury city council banned the practice after keeper Trevor Smith was mauled to death by a Siberian tiger in 1994.

SHELL announced that it would dismantle its Leman BK gas platform on land rather than dispose of the installations in the North Sea.

AN OBSESSIVE pigeon feeder, Jean Knowlson, aged 68, was jailed for 56 days for repeatedly breaching court orders by distributing mounds of bread around her south London home.

Half of UK's schools 'failing'

John Carvel

HALF THE primary schools and two-fifths of secondary schools are failing to teach children to a satisfactory standard, the Office for Standards in Education said in its annual report on the condition of schooling in England.

"While teachers secure satisfactory standards of achievement in the majority of lessons observed by inspectors, there are unacceptably wide variations between what is achieved by different schools. The most successful secondary schools achieve GCSE results twice as good as others in similar socio-economic circumstances and six times better than those achieved by the least successful in less favoured areas."

Although there was not yet comparable data for primary schools, there was little reason to suppose the picture was not similar in that sector.

Some of the problem schools identified in previous years' inspections were starting to make progress, but there was serious cause for concern about the performance of schools serving disadvantaged areas.



A lesson to be learnt . . . Primaries have many problems in common with secondary schools PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

"Such schools can face huge problems. Disruptive pupil behaviour may be exacerbated by inadequate parental support. It can be very difficult to recruit and retain good teachers", the report said.

Teachers' low expectations of pupils could reinforce the low expectations of education in the communities served by these schools. "It need not be so. Some schools serving extremely deprived areas achieve very good standards. This is because they are invariably led by men and women of exceptional ability."

Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector, identified three problem areas: literacy (especially for ages 8 to 11), general numeracy, and teaching quality. Schools should be more vigilant in tracking pupils' progress and monitoring the teaching they receive.

Standards in the early years of secondary school were also too low, because of inadequate curriculum liaison with the primary schools and a tendency to deploy "the least well-qualified or least experienced teachers" at this age level.

The Ofsted report, drawing conclusions from more than 4,000 inspections, praised more than 200 schools for their outstanding success or pace of improvement.

But even the better teachers needed to improve their methods, given shortcomings in nearly half the primary schools and just over a third of secondary schools.

The report also noted a growing gap between the achievement at GCSE of girls and boys. Girls' success was particularly marked in areas of urban disadvantage. Boys from African Caribbean communities continued to underachieve.

Last month, the Education and Employment Secretary, Gillian Shephard, said that it would be inappropriate to publish school performance tables of tests of 11-year-olds until the new system of assessment was revised.

On Monday, however, she changed her mind and promised to publish the tables to give parents more information about how well primary schools were doing.

"We have to make sure that they are being made fully accountable and that the results are transparent for all to see," she said.

Sinn Fein denies danger of split in republican movement

David Sharrock

SINN FEIN'S chief negotiator, Martin McGuinness, has denied there is any danger of the IRA splitting because of grassroots republican unrest over the peace process.

Mr McGuinness was responding on Sunday to a claim by George Mitchell, leader of the international panel on decommissioning paramilitary weapons, that there are potentially damaging differences of opinion within the republican movement.

Mr Mitchell, who headed the three-man advisory body and who acts as President Clinton's special Ireland envoy, said everybody needed to move quickly to full negotiations on Northern Ireland.

Asked on BBC television whether the IRA would return to violence, he said: "I think there is a danger of a fracture within that organisation. It seems clear that not all on the republican side favour the ceasefire and the potential for some elements to take direct and violent action does remain. I hope that is not the case."

Speaking later, Mr McGuinness said: "I was surprised to hear that Senator Mitchell has said this. I believe that over the course of the last 18 months since the beginning of the ceasefire that the IRA have proved themselves to be a very disciplined and cohesive organisation. I don't believe there is any danger of a split in the IRA."

Last Saturday the IRA denied responsibility for a gun attack during which 57 shots were fired at the home of a policeman in County Tyrone. The shooting and last week's murder of the Irish National Liberation Army's chief of staff, Gino Gallagher, raised fears that the ceasefire could crumble if the peace process is not moved forward soon.

Mr Gallagher, named by security and republican sources as having been INLA chief-of-staff for less than nine months, was shot several times at point-blank range as he collected his social security benefit on the Falls Road in West Belfast. The RUC is working on the theory that he was killed by dissenting former comrades in the INLA.

The killing cast a shadow on fresh political efforts to reduce tension between London and the nationalist community over plans to hold elections in Northern Ireland, and led to renewed calls for the decommissioning of illegal weapons.

It appears that the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, is reluctantly edging towards acceptance of the British government's call for elections to a Northern Ireland body, but only if the Unionists give guarantees that they will not put up further blocks to all-party talks.

Mr Spring, speaking at the end of difficult four-hour talks in London with the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, implied that his government might back elections if the Unionists were forced to give cast-iron assurances that once the elected body was established it would hold full negotiations, including with Sinn Fein, and not make IRA decommissioning of arms a pre-condition to talks.

The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, speaking after separate talks with Mr Major, insisted that he would be willing to hold a dialogue with Sinn Fein once the party had won a fresh mandate.

He asserted: "By taking the route of an elected body, one obviates the need for decommissioning before elections, but the need for decommissioning does not disappear."

Meanwhile, Gerry Adams had a surprise meeting with President Clinton last week during talks in Washington on the Ulster peace process.

The move took British officials aback as the president did not meet Mr Ancram, the Northern Ireland minister, when he was in Washington earlier last week to brief White House security adviser Anthony Lake about Mr Major's proposals for elections.

Lilley in dock over cuts to asylum seekers' benefits

Alan Travis

THE High Court on Monday cleared the way for a legal challenge to the Government's decision to withdraw welfare benefits from up to 30,000 asylum seekers a year.

A full judicial review hearing to be held this week could lead to a high court injunction against Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary.

The case will be heard alongside challenges brought by both Westminster, and Hammersmith and Fulham councils, also claiming Mr Lilley has acted illegally. The benefit cuts came into effect at midnight on Monday.

The action brought by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants claims the £200 million a year benefit cuts were *ultra vires* and improper because they would effectively curtail asylum seekers' ability to pursue claims to be refugees.

Mr Justice Brooke agreed the council had "an arguable case" that asylum seekers were entitled to be treated as genuine refugees until their claims were determined.

Nicholas Blake, QC, for the council, said there were 267 cases last year of people who were recognised as refugees only when their appeals were heard. They would be among those no longer eligible to claim housing benefit, income support or other welfare benefits.

He said the measures could lead to destitute immigrant families being driven on to the streets — or "improperly forced" to return to countries where they feared persecution. The regulations were an unlawful means to dissuade asylum seekers from pursuing appeals.

The Refugee Council believes the decision to withdraw benefits from 70 per cent of asylum seekers to save £200 million a year will have a hidden side-effect in further curtailing their rights to claim refugee status. Asylum-seekers can make a claim only if they have a fixed address.

● Paul Seils of the Scottish Refugee Council last week demanded that the Home Office reassess its view of Nigeria's military regime after an immigration tribunal in Glasgow allowed two appeals by asylum seekers against deportation in defiance of government advice.

Clues to cause of cot death

DIFFERENT parenting styles — including the constant attention given by Bangladeshi mothers to their infants — may offer new clues on how to prevent cot death, *writes Chris Mihill*.

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths plans to spend £200,000 researching babies, not just cot death babies, to establish what is normal child health, thereby helping to understand what goes wrong in cot death.

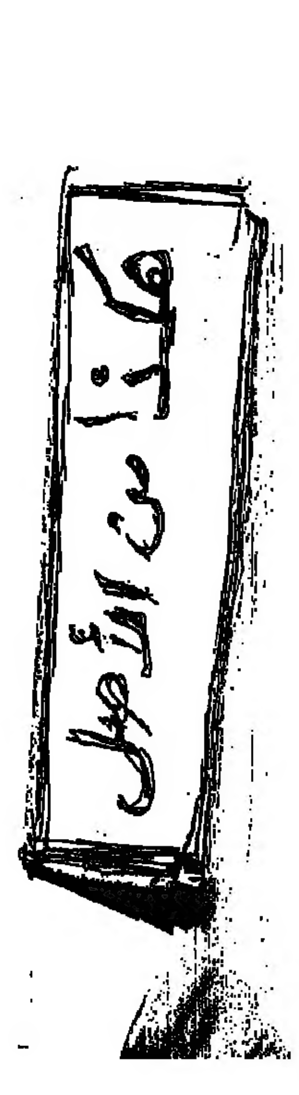
Peter Fleming, head of the foundation's infant health unit at Bristol, said cot death appeared to be an abnormal response to everyday stresses encountered by babies, which most coped with.

There were wide differences between cultural and social groups in rates of cot death, and if protective factors could be understood then far clearer advice could be given to parents.

There were difficulties in interpreting cultural differences, but Bangladeshi mothers in the UK kept their babies with them virtually 24 hours a day, with significantly lower rates of cot death.

However, studies in New Zealand among the Maori community, who appeared to have similar practices, showed very much higher rates.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 11 1996



China's salvoes across the water

THE CHINESE army's special show of military callisthenics last week, across the border from Hong Kong, was designed to soothe public opinion. Lunging with bayonets and employing flame-throwers may seem an odd way to reassure Hong Kongers that life will be entirely peaceful after June 30, 1997. But for Beijing to refrain from deploying troops in Hong Kong — a territory under colonial rule for a century and a half — would have been an amazing act of self-denial. China in its present mood is certainly not going to miss the chance to invest the handover with all the patriotic symbolism which it will bear — a mood illustrated by its commitment to nuclear testing.

Can the heightened tension in the Taiwan Strait also be seen as merely a symbolic reiteration of Chinese sovereignty, or is the Beijing leadership being nudged by an assertive army into a more worrying posture? The speech by the prime minister, Li Peng, repeating the threat that an overt move towards Taiwanese independence could prompt a military attack, said nothing new. Since 1950 China has refused to renounce the right to use force "in the last analysis" — as Mr Li put it. Equally, since 1950 China has never shown any serious intention of wishing to invade. But the situation has not stood still.

In Taiwan the ruling Kuomintang has managed to retain power only by giving ground to the independence lobby while as time goes on the de facto reality of an independent Taiwan, whatever its notional status, becomes harder to deny. On the mainland, meanwhile, pressure may increase for the problem to be solved once and for all. It was not just rhetoric which led Deng Xiaoping, while announcing his new policy of speeded-up economic reform in 1992, to say that the "reunification of the motherland" still remains the top priority. Patriotic assertion has become to an increasing extent a substitute for defunct socialism.

The return of Hong Kong (and soon afterwards Macao) to Beijing moves Taiwan inexorably up the agenda. In one sense this should be good news for Hong Kong: there is even less reason for Beijing to throw its weight around unnecessarily and by doing so to make the Taiwanese even more nervous. Some reassurance may be found in the growing economic role of the People's Liberation Army. Directly or through family members, its officer corps is now engaged in entrepreneurial activities. But "in the last analysis" this factor is not decisive. The PLA is a formidable force with more offensive muscle than in previous decades: the possibility of miscalculation cannot be ruled out. Taiwan should behave with practical caution. No one is asking the Chinese to renounce anything but it would be in their best interests to tone down the pyrotechnics.

Taxing time for graduates

FREE tuition at British universities is coming to an end. Some may rightly say it ended some years ago. More than three years ago the Government's education inspectors reported arts and design students were having to pay up to £1,000 a year for course material. The average polytechnic in 1990 had a book budget of £23 per pupil — £3 less than the average cost of an academic tome at the time. The cause of such academic cost-cutting is not hard to identify. Britain has moved from an élite to a mass system of higher education within a decade. It is only eight years since the then Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, set the country a 25-year goal of lifting the proportion of school-leavers going on to college from 14 to 30 per cent. That proportion was achieved within six years — and would have been even higher today but for the freeze on places imposed by ministers. Just as rewarding has been the steep rise in mature students. Six out of 10 of today's 18-year-olds can expect to enter university or college sooner or later in their lives. There is much to celebrate about this expansion — more equal opportunity, better access to economic ladders, wider opportunities for personal development — and one issue to lament: no political party has explained how this will be financed.

Tory ministers have ducked behind the vice-chancellors. Various finance schemes were examined to plug the widening gap between the subsidies which universities receive and the cost of providing tuition. Top-up fees were looked at by some institutions. The vice-chancellors' club devised a full cost fees scheme with income-related scholarships to protect the poor but then pulped the paper before it was published. Now they are examining £300 registration fees for new students, but have stepped back from taking a decision.

Until now universities have concentrated on squeezing costs. By 1990 the old polytechnics and some universities were receiving about one third less per pupil than a decade earlier. Since then, the squeeze has continued. Total subsidies have risen by almost 25 per cent but because of the increase in student numbers, the subsidy per pupil has fallen by a further 25 per cent. Any further squeeze will seriously erode standards.

The need is to maintain pressure on all three main political parties. Labour talked two years ago about tuition contributions from better-off students but postponed its paper in the hope ministers would have to move first. Lib-Dems have been equally timid but announced they would be publishing plans later this month backing long-term tuition loans with repayments through income tax or national insurance contributions. Governments of both the left (Sweden) and the right (Germany) have adopted such schemes. An even more popular model, backed by the vice-chancellors, is the Australian graduate tax. Even the National Union of Students initially supported this idea. Further procrastination is unacceptable. Student numbers have been rising at the equivalent rate of three new universities a year. This is beyond belt-tightening: it needs bucks. A graduate tax looks the best option: cheaper to administer, less likely to deter, raises more revenue than loans. In short, the fairest way of repaying the benefits of university life.

The maiming of Sri Lanka

CARNAGE in the streets of the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, where more than 80 people were killed and about 1,300 injured last week by suspected Tamil suicide bombers, is a terrible reminder of the human cost of civil war — and of the limits of force in solving chronic ethnic conflicts. The violence shows no sign of abating. Tamils, making up nearly 18 per cent of the 18 million strong population, want more say in running their own lives with demands ranging from greater powers for provincial councils to full independence in the north and east of the country.

They have always argued that Colombo's language, education and employment policies have been shaped in ways that favour the majority Sinhalese. This is a war with roots deep in the past, but the special tragedy of last week's dreadful explosion, attributed to the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, is that it comes at a time when prospects for a political settlement — the only sort possible — had seemed brighter than before.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga was widely praised when she took the initiative a year ago, boldly offering a cessation of hostilities with the LTTE, only to face renewed attacks on military and civilian targets. Her package of devolution proposals, offering substantial autonomy on eight regional councils, was rejected both by the Tigers and hardline Sinhalese nationalists. Recently presented to parliament in clear legal form, the proposals are on hold but could represent a major constitutional accommodation for legitimate Tamil concerns — yet without the approval of the Tigers they cannot be implemented.

The government too has followed a dual strategy: Mrs Kumaratunga came under pressure from her own generals, and last October authorised a new offensive that resulted in the capture of the Tiger-controlled Jaffna peninsula. But without that key citadel to defend they then became freer to concentrate on what made them notorious — terrorism.

The Tigers have always had ruthlessness on their side: their leader, the messianic Velupillai Prabhakaran, sent "hit squads" to kill the Indian prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, as well as the Sri Lankan president, Ranasinghe Premadasa, and the opposition presidential candidate, Gamini Dissanayake. And as their extremism sets the tone, other Tamils have either fallen silent or become collaborators. This war, with its inevitable atrocities and human rights abuses by both sides, has brutalised Sri Lanka.

How the world grew to love the Bomb

Martin Woollacott

EVERY major nation comes to negotiations over nuclear disarmament with its own special history of involvement in the seductive and terrible mystery of these weapons. To say that the result is therefore a charade is not quite true. But it is certainly a drama played out on two levels.

The Geneva talks on banning nuclear tests are presented as a step toward a world free of nuclear weapons, which they may in the end prove to be. What they are in the meantime is an intense bargaining session between the nuclear powers and the states who already covertly possess nuclear weapons or have the technology to acquire them quickly. Both groups are split, and neither has any plans to give up their weapons or their capacity, or all the options for improving either. At a third point of the triangle are countries without these weapons but who may have connections of alliance or interest with those who do. What the talks are about is the terms on which nations can live with each other in a world where these devices have lost less of their allure than we had hoped.

Last week in Geneva the Swedes called on China to follow France's example and end testing, and the Australians, South Africans and Japanese also welcomed France's decision. The Americans, backed by the British and the suddenly virtuous French, are urging agreement on a comprehensive test ban treaty by June, so that nations can begin signing up by this September. The Indians, meanwhile, are ambiguous about whether or not they reserve the right to test.

Read between the lines in the speeches. Sweden, while striving to be, in Olof Palme's words, a "moral great power", considered developing its own bomb 20 years ago. France has made the Bomb into the single most important symbol of its determination that it should be able to stand alone and, even now, believes that its nuclear strength can be traded off against the superior economic strength of Germany. Australia, now one of the anti-nuclear leaders, let the British test in the country's interior. Britain itself has from the start considered the Bomb to be, as Ernest Bevin said, its ticket to the top table. The South Africans secretly developed a nuclear device, part of their doomed effort to hold off the inevitable through armed might. The Japanese have had the means to bring together warhead and delivery technology, to create an overnight weapon, for years.

Russia, whose moratorium on testing renewed the hopes that a comprehensive test ban treaty could be achieved, is as attached to the symbolism of nuclear weapons as any country. Gorbachev inherited a situation in which Russia had striven for world power status by building up nuclear armaments. Paradoxically, he maintained that status, for a while, by reducing them. Now, in a changed atmosphere, different signals are coming out of Russia. China, twisting and turning at Geneva to retain the opportunity to test into the mid-term future, has good reason to recall, at this moment of renewed tension over Taiwan, the days in 1954 and 1958 when they bombarded that island but had to back down when the United States made it clear that a full scale attack might meet with an American nuclear response. Out of those humiliations was born the enhanced Chinese nuclear weapons programme, one of whose objectives is undoubtedly still to overawe Taiwan and inhibit forceful American reactions. The Chinese see nuclear weapons, in other words, as essential in their long struggle to achieve the regional dominance and the prominence in world affairs they think they deserve.

As for India, it is ironic that the whole test ban concept, now over 40 years old, sprang from an Indian initiative. In 1954, the Nehru government proposed to the nuclear powers what it called a "standstill agreement". Today, the Indian government says it wants a clear timetable for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the existing nuclear powers as a condition for India's signature. It does not, of course, believe that there is any likelihood of this. What the Indians really want, it seems likely, is to upgrade their own weapons, either by testing or by getting technical help from the existing nuclear powers, or both. They see such an upgrading as vital in deterring China, and a Pakistan receiving nuclear weapons assistance from China. It is perfectly possible that the Indians will choose the "test and sign" option, while still agitating for technology transfers — in computer simulation, even in warhead designs — from the US.

NUCLEAR weapons retain their attraction, whatever the theorists and the moralists say about their uselessness and viciousness. Governments believe they need them for rational security reasons; they also cling to them because nuclear weapons undoubtedly constitute a kind of dark magic which politicians and soldiers recognise and want to possess. They are complicit in a nuclear armed world.

The Indian prime minister, P V Narasimha Rao, said recently that the established nuclear powers want to "hold on to their awesome arsenals, kept trim by sophisticated computer simulation techniques, while they want all others to look on with empty hands." What he did not add was that the non-established nuclear powers, the existing holders of concealed or all-but nuclear weapons technology, have an agenda too. That agenda always involves upgrading to a point where an advantage has been achieved over a potential enemy, with an expressed readiness then to stop. In other words both groups want the same thing — to reach and maintain a position of nuclear armed advantage.

Countries want to keep their nuclear weapons, but at the same time are ready to bargain about creating a hierarchy of nuclear capacity as long as their place in it fits in with national interests. This, then, is going to be a treaty about relative position rather than about reducing nuclear weapons. It is still worth having, if only because it will inhibit the nuclear have-nots from trying to join the club. Flawed though the treaty will be, is better than the alternative.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 11 1996

Limping giant beats a slow retreat

The military machine of the Soviet era has collapsed, forcing nationalists to rely on nuclear threats against the West. **David Hearst** reports from Moscow

Take a break . . . Russian soldiers take a rest at a military camp near Grozny, the Chechen capital. The conflict has exposed the growing weakness of Moscow's conventional forces PHOTOGRAPH: OLEG NIKISHIN

A NEW concept of national security is emerging in senior Russian military, political and intelligence circles which would make any enlargement of Nato to the three Baltic states a cause for war.

One senior defence analyst — the author of a draft national security doctrine that could well be put into practice under a new president — said: "Accepting the Baltics into Nato would be as provocative to us as the deployment of nuclear missiles on Cuba was to Washington. Accepting Poland and Hungary into Nato means a cold peace, while an enlargement to include the Baltics is war."

The doctrine being elaborated by the independent and highly influential Institute of Defence Studies in Moscow defines the territory of the former Soviet Union as the zone of "basic Russian national interests". The army's main task would not only be the defence of national territory and the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, but the defence of the rights of 25 million Russians in the "near abroad".

Russia's potential adversaries are defined as the United States and Nato. Their main allies are defined as Ukraine, China and Iran.

Anton Surikov is a research fellow at the institute and an aide to Yuri Maslukov, the former politburo member and a key figure in Russia's military-industrial complex who has re-emerged as chairman of the economic committee in the Duma (parliament).

Mr Surikov said: "The more radical points of this document must be seen as responsive measures if the position of the West develops into the worst scenario for Russia. The Baltic states can play a very good role as bridge between Russia and the West. But it cannot be a zone where Nato infrastructures are to be deployed. "If Nato began its evolution towards a political structure, that would be another thing — but today what we have is the real possibility of Nato military infrastructures moving towards our borders and this is what provokes concern. All the talk of Russian aggressiveness is a bluff. The West really understands that Russia is technically in no position to invade."

The growing weakness of Russian conventional forces, graphically illustrated by their inability after 14 months to crush just 6,000 separatist fighters in Chechenia, is making the military planners of a nationalist Russia even more reliant upon the country's nuclear deterrent.

Without the satellite states in central and eastern Europe, Russian generals see themselves in a position analogous to western Europe at the height of Soviet military power. Outgunned by the overwhelming might of Nato's conventional forces, Russia would have to rely on nuclear weapons as its main deterrent.

The concept of national security elaborated by the institute, extreme though it appears, is not radically at odds with what the army top brass themselves think.

Vladimir Slipchenko, the vice-president of the Academy of Military Science, is a retired major-general and an authority on Russian military doctrine and its reform. Professor Slipchenko said: "On the territory of potential Nato members, a potential military theatre is being prepared with a network of airports, communications and command systems. We are looking with concern at how Hungarian airports are being used by Nato for the operation in Bosnia."

Since the end of the Soviet Union, the Russian army has seen itself as on the retreat. Its size has gone from more than 4 million men to 1.5 million. Its best equipped and trained units once stationed in Germany, Poland and the Baltics have been withdrawn and, with no place to house them, disbanded.

Many of the second-rate units that were already stationed in Russia remained untouched. They have now become undermanned, underfunded and in no condition to go into service. Many units have 20 per cent fewer officers than they need to operate at battle strength. At the rank of *praporshik*, the Russian equivalent of sergeant, the degree of undermanning rises to 30 per cent and, in the ranks, some units are operating at 50 per cent below battle strength.

The problem with having thousands of units operating under strength creates bizarre sights. Senior officers are often seen doing soldiers' jobs: at the controls of a tank, or even operating the lift to the control bunker of an air-defence unit in Moscow.

One of the Russian soldiers killed trying to stop the Chechen commandos escaping from the Dagestani border village of Pervomayskaya was an officer of the rank of colonel. He was leading a unit of only 20 or so men — doing a lieutenant's job.

Reformers do not have a problem with numbers. They argue the ideal size of a modern, professional Russian army should be about 1 million. There are, in fact, currently about 5 million men under arms: apart from the armed forces, under General Pavel Grachev, rival services compete for resources.

As a result of the refusal by most army units to storm the former parliament in October 1993, and now as a result of the quagmire in Chechenia, Russia's president, Boris Yeltsin, has grown to rely upon interior ministry (MVD) forces.

IN consequence, the MVD "army" has burgeoned to about 300,000 men. There is now talk of it getting its own tanks and helicopter gunships.

Prof Slipchenko says the chaos caused by rivalry between enforcement ministries goes all the way to the top: "We have a plethora of enforcement structures, but we don't have a united armed forces of the Russian Federation . . . The defence ministry can't reorganise itself without a complex of measures by the state which take in all the other enforcement ministries and the military-industrial complex . . ."

The armed forces have just been left to take care of themselves. Everyone has forgotten about them. The president had given them neither a plan nor money."

Not all branches of the armed forces are embroiled in chaos. There are well prepared and equipped land and air-defence units, and well trained and guarded strategic rocket force units. But the underfunding of the army is a fact of life. In 1994 it actually received only 46 per cent of the money allocated to it by parliament, in 1995 only 50 per cent and this year 70 per cent. This means that it has only got money for the first seven months of this year and, after that, could potentially grind to a halt.

Three years ago, Prof Slipchenko saw the opposition first hand when he visited Fort Sill, in Oklahoma. There, he spoke to a US soldier manning a self-propelled gun. "That man had served for 18 years — he was like a professor," he said. "He knew everything about his gun. How can you compare him to a Russian 19-year-old conscript, spending a year and a half in the army? An American soldier earns about $800 a month. This is more than the salary of Russia's defence minister."

The absence of political leadership is demoralising. Anton Surikov of the defence institute said: "One of the main problems of the army is the fact that their commander-in-chief, Yeltsin, considers the armed forces not as a means of defence of the country, but of himself. As he now considers that the army is less loyal to him, a very big part of the budget now goes to the ministry of the interior."

It is calculations such as these, as well as bitter experience of war in the North Caucasus, that is the real motive behind a new military doctrine in which Russia once again faces the fact that it can depend on no one but itself. After a decade of decline, this mood is bound to take, at least initially, an anti-Western appearance.

Russia's hardening resistance to the expansion of Nato dominated the weekend's military science conference in Munich attended by senior Nato officials, United States and European politicians and military experts, *writes Ian Traynor in Munich*.

The Russian participant, the deputy defence minister, Andrei Kokoshin, triggered alarm and aggressive verbal sparring that recalled cold-war days by circulating a paper denouncing the proposed Nato expansion.

His paper argued that plans to extend the alliance eastwards into Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were aimed at delivering "the final blow to the cold-war enemy". He said the expansion would increase hostility in Europe and usher in a new era of "dangerous confrontation" between Nato and Russia.

Financial woes, page 12

Battlefield disaster against Chechens

James Meek in Moscow

SHORTLY before the first Russian attack on the Dagestani village of Pervomayskaya — where Chechen separatists holding hostages had dug in — the desperate commander of a platoon of paratroopers ordered to hold a large and vitally important stretch of open country blocking the rebels' escape route begged an infantry unit to lend him an armoured car. They did.

When the assault began, the gunner tried to test its cannon on the first moving target he saw — a cow. After firing three clips he realised the cannon had not been ranged properly. Before he could decide what to do about it, the Chechens blew the vehicle up with an anti-tank rocket.

It was an inauspicious start for an operation where all the odds should have been in Russia's favour but where 200 well-led, motivated guerrillas showed they were not.

It was clear from the beginning of the siege of Pervomayskaya that the federal troops wanted to force a resolution of the hostage drama. But in the four days before the attack, while the Chechens were digging the deep-trench system and charging (on mains electricity) the walkie-talkies that would so confound their enemies, the Russians were tying themselves in knots.

A host of diverse units from all over Russia — with no experience of working together — were rushed to the scene and deposited in flat, open, snow-covered fields, scoured by icy winds, without food, clothing, shelter or adequate means of communicating with each other.

There were police SOBR units (a kind of Swat team) from as many as eight different regions. Their usual job is to arrest groups of armed criminals in big cities. There was the Alpha anti-terrorist unit, trained to rescue groups of hostages from aircraft, buses or buildings. There were paratroopers and motorised infantry conscripts, trained — if they were trained at all — to fight Nato in a future conflict. There were artillerymen, trained to shell grid positions on maps. There were helicopter gunship crews, trained to shoot up villages in Chechenia and Afghanistan.

In charge of them all was General Mikhail Barsukov, a former KGB officer and now in charge of its successor, the federal security service — a man who had built his career organising bodyguards for VIPs.

Throughout the build-up to the assault, and the subsequent operation — which ended only when the Chechen leader, Salman Raduyev, his fighters and a large number of their captives slipped through the sloppy cordon and escaped — many of the Russian troops were cold, hungry and isolated.

Of the 50 members of the Moscow SOBR unit, four were killed in the fighting, 13 were injured and 20 ended up in hospital with frostbite and pneumonia.

Despite the chaos, SOBR units did manage to penetrate deep inside the village, and it remains a mystery why they did not establish a bridgehead — presumably because they had not expected such losses and were not prepared for hand-to-hand fighting.

As in the battle for Grozny, the Chechen capital, the ground troops had little or no control over air and artillery support, which was as much a danger to them as to the enemy.

A village filled with dug-in armed fighters and randomly located civilian hostages was an exceptionally difficult tactical objective if federal troops had any intention of saving the captives.

Perhaps the worst mistake the Russians made was choosing to attack instead of nego[illegible] a withdrawal. But that wo[illegible] meant President Boris Yel[illegible]

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 11 1996

AIDS Bill Will Force Soldiers Out of Army

Dana Priest

MARIE, a staff sergeant who has been in the Army 10 years, figures she has done what has been expected of her, and more. She has worked hard, spent months away from her family on assignments, "given 110 percent" to her job and is in line for an important promotion.

Except now she expects to be forced out of the Army.

That's because last month Congress passed and President Clinton agreed to sign a defense bill that includes a provision to discharge service members with the AIDS virus, regardless of whether they are sick or can still perform their jobs.

Marie, who is 34 and has a daughter in elementary school, was infected by her late husband before he knew he had the disease.

"I'm widowed from it, I have a child and now I'm going to lose my job," she said in an interview at a friend's home in Northern Virginia. "No one's looking at the work I've done. No one's looking at the commitment I made . . . It feels like the United States has turned its back on me."

Marie noted that she was being forced from her profession for having HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, just when many people were applauding basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson's return to professional play despite having the virus.

Afraid of being stigmatized, she will not allow her full name to be used in this article. She has not told her daughter or most of her co-workers she is HIV-positive and only informed her mother last month, although she was diagnosed five years ago and informed her Army supervisors. "It's my family I'm concerned about," she said.

The HIV measure in the defense bill was introduced by Rep. Robert K. Dornan (Rep-California), a conservative presidential aspirant and former combat pilot who has become a lightning rod for anger among AIDS activists and others, including Marie.

Dornan has attracted their criticism for comments such as one he made on the House floor in November, when he defended the provision by saying AIDS "is spread by human God-given free will," and then listing what he described as the three ways service members get AIDS: "Rolling up your white, khaki or blue uniform sleeve and sticking a contaminated, filthy needle in your arm . . . heterosexual sex with prostitutes . . . and having unprotected (homosexual) sex with strangers in some hide-away or men's room somewhere."

"I feel outraged" at Dornan, said Marie. "I can't go out into the public and talk about my disease because the American people don't understand this disease. How can I feel safe if I have a leader on Capitol Hill who says things like this."

"Everything I worked for he's taking away from me, everything I know," she said. "I've left my family to go to school, I've left my family to go overseas. I did it because that was what the military expected of me. If I didn't want to make it my career, I wouldn't have done it."

There are 1,049 male and female service members who have the AIDS virus. They have been allowed to continue to work and to reenlist as long as they are able to perform their jobs. But the military tests personnel for HIV about every two years, and those with the virus are prohibited from being sent to overseas posts or into combat. Marie went abroad before being infected.

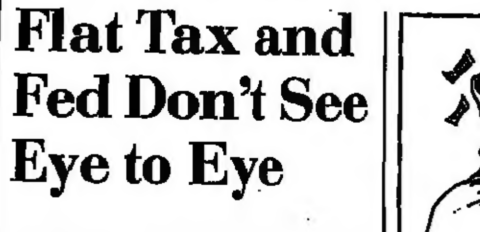
"It sounds like a tragic case," Dornan said of Marie in an interview last week. But, he added, AIDS sufferers put an undue burden on other service members who have to fill in for them overseas. "She can't go to Bosnia. She can't go to Haiti. She can't go to Somalia. She can't go anywhere in this world . . . and she obviously had unprotected sex with someone whose entire background she didn't know . . . She should be a good patriot and take her honorable discharge."

Defense Department statistics show that half of the 1,049 service members with the AIDS virus are married.

Several high-ranking military officials and military organizations have supported Dornan's provision because they believe HIV-positive service members are a drain on military readiness. In 1993, Adm. Frank Kelso II, then Chief of Naval Operations, wrote Dornan to say that retaining HIV-positive service members "imposes significant problems for all services, especially the Navy. Assignment limitations cause significant disruption in the sea/shore rotation for all our personnel."

Clinton was set to sign the defense bill early this week. After he does, Marie, who works on personnel issues at the Pentagon, will be discharged within six months. She will retain her medical benefits but will not be entitled to retirement benefits or the kind of substantial disability pay she could have gotten had she remained in the Army until she became too sick to work. She will also lose the health insurance she has for her daughter.

White House officials said they hope to have some alternative to the provision ready when Clinton signs the bill. Among the options under consideration is to have Clinton sign an executive order that would allow service members to retain health insurance for their dependents or to support legislation to repeal the provision.



Flat Tax and Fed Don't See Eye to Eye

OPINION
Robert Kuttner

COOPERS & LYBRAND recently audited Steve Forbes' proposed flat tax. The blue chip accounting firm found that the flat tax would indeed leave the Treasury about $200 billion a year short, just as critics allege.

The analysis did leave Forbes one improbable out. If the economy grew at 5 percent a year, then there would be no revenue shortfall and everything would be rosy.

Well, yes. And if my grandmother had wheels she would be a bicycle. There is no evidence a flat tax would cause the economy to grow at 5 percent a year. On the contrary, there is an iron consensus that the best the economy can do, whatever the tax system, is its current growth rate — around 2.5 percent. This is the orthodox view, whatever the rates of savings, investment and productivity.

At that rate, workers have little bargaining power. Increases in productivity go to shareholders, not employees. That's why earnings are flat and the stock market is soaring.

At the very center of this consensus is the Federal Reserve Board, in the role of Enforcer. Whenever the economy shows signs of growing faster, the Fed hits the brakes.

And the problem is not just the Fed, but central bankers as a breed. Even though inflation is ice-cold, the world's major central bankers think the risk of reigniting inflation, however remote, justifies their policies of sluggish growth.

In the past decade, the world has moved in the direction of freer markets and presumably greater economic efficiency. But despite all the deregulation, new technology, globalization, the shift from communism to capitalism, and the open trade, the world economy today is growing at only about half the rate of the post-World War II boom — when everything was more regulated.



Evidently, all these gains to efficiency are impotent to raise growth as long as central bankers keep the economy's potential leashed by keeping money too tight. And that seems to be the real constraint on economic performance, whether the tax system is flat or round.

The flat-taxers reprise the supply-side arguments of the early 1980s: By lowering taxes, especially on investors, we would increase the rewards to capital. That, in turn, would increase rates of savings and investment.

Investment pays for new technology that allows society to enjoy higher standards of living. Hence it isn't so offensive to give the wealthy a tax holiday, since "everyone" ultimately benefits. The dubious part of the flat-taxers' claim is that lower taxes are the key to higher investment. But even if the flat-taxers are right about taxes and investment (which is doubtful), the Fed isn't changing its views about how much growth the economy can stand. There have already been momentous structural changes in the economy that allow higher, non-inflationary growth rates — but the Fed hasn't budged.

For example, globalization makes it hard for producers to impose price hikes on the public. Consumers just shift to imports. Deregulation, likewise, has weakened old monopolies and left industry in a brutal contest to cut costs, not raise prices.

Similarly, weaker unions and higher unemployment leave labor unable to press for wage increases. The old risk of industry passing along wage hikes as price hikes is a dead letter.

The Fed has somehow missed it, but inflation is dead. And if the central bankers are oblivious to all of these epochal changes, a flat tax won't make a difference either.

Besides, investors are reaping plenty of rewards without additional tax favoritism. The stock market continues to set new records, notwithstanding the tax system. And every time the Fed grudgingly eases up a little, as it did last month, the market sets a new record.

This should tell you what we really need — not a different tax code, but a different Fed. That would be a much more direct route to higher growth, without widening inequalities that are already appalling.

If supply-siders want to do something useful to unleash economic growth, they should drop the flat tax and join other critics of austerity in a common project to reform the Fed.

Congress Approves Big Changes to Telecom Laws

Mike Mills

CONGRESS last week overwhelmingly passed the largest overhaul of telecommunications laws in 62 years, clearing the way for President Clinton to sign into law a measure that promises to change the way Americans receive telephone, television and computer services.

By removing long-standing monopoly protections, the bill would allow people to get long-distance service from their local phone company, for example, or local phone service from their long-distance or cable company. Or they might get it all, with TV and cellular service thrown in, from one company, on one bill.

But in some areas it imposes new regulations. It would require that television makers put a "v-chip" in many sets that would allow parents to block out violent programs. More controversially, it would establish criminal penalties for people who make material deemed "indecent" available to minors on-line.

Clinton hailed the bill's final passage, saying in a statement that "consumers will receive the benefits of lower prices, better quality and greater choices in their telephone and cable services, and they will continue to benefit from a diversity of voices and viewpoints in radio, television and the print media."

But many consumer groups oppose the measure. They say it will deregulate industries that continue to wield monopoly power before competition arrives. Cable rates are likely to rise, they say, as federal rate controls are lifted.

"This bill is bad for consumers," said Bradley Stillman of the Consumer Federation of America. "For every provision in the bill that encourages competition, there are other provisions that undermine it."

In essence, the bill would sweep away regulatory barriers that prevent telephone, cable, broadcast and other communications companies from entering each other's markets. It would loosen limits on how many TV and radio stations a single company can own. It also would allow broadcasters to offer new money-making interactive services over their airwaves.

"It's the industry's equivalent of the Berlin Wall being broken down," said Robert Mayer, senior manager at the Deloitte and Touche Consulting Group. "We're going to see major industry groups with enormous resources begin to penetrate each others' markets."

Republican and Democratic sponsors also have touted the legislation as a job creation measure — despite recent major layoff announcements made by entrenched companies such as AT&T Corporation. Trumpeting that theme were the bill's chief sponsors Senator Larry Pressler (Rep-South Dakota), and Representative Thomas J. Bliley Jr. (Rep-Virginia), both of whom repeatedly called the legislation "the greatest jobs bill of the decade."

The legislation breezed through both chambers after Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (Rep-Kansas), won assurance from Federal Communications Commission Chairman Reed E. Hundt that the agency would award no free licenses this year to broadcasters for new digital television service, allowing Congress to revisit the issue later. Dole had stalled the bill for weeks, complaining about what he called a "giveaway" of lucrative airwaves to the broadcasters.

The Senate passed the measure by a 91-5 vote, less than an hour after the House approved it 414 to 16. Clinton will sign the bill this week, Vice President Gore said.

Under the legislation, the nation's local telephone carriers, dominated by the seven regional Bell companies, must allow all competitors to set up for business and connect to the Bells' traditionally monopolized telephone wires, switches and facilities. Once that happens, the $94 billion-a-year local residential telephone market will face its first real competition ever.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 11 1996

Ghost Writer Haunts White House

Washington wants to know who the anonymous author of a best-selling novel is. **Marc Fisher** reports



PRIMARY COLORS
A Novel of Politics
ANONYMOUS

Clinton aide Stephanopoulos is set on naming the author of Primary Colors, especially as the novel's main character is based on him

THE ANONYMOUS author of "Primary Colors" — the fictional treatment of the 1992 Clinton campaign that has soared atop bestseller lists and stymied political Washington's efforts to divine its creator — is negotiating for a million-dollar paperback contract and a big-money deal for a second book, according to an authoritative New York publishing source.

The day after President Clinton challenged reporters to find out who wrote the novel that portrays him with what one aide called "intense ambivalence," a parade of suspected authors and obsessed insiders took to the TV chat shows and kept phone lines buzzing as they traded speculation and reached desperately for the thinnest evidence.

A well-reviewed but — if not for the mystery over its authorship — otherwise unremarkable novel has, by dint of its uncanny verisimilitude and a brilliant marketing ploy, turned into a publicist's dream. Even the president, who called the mystery "the only secret I've seen kept in Washington in three years," announced he plans to read it.

Only the book's agent, Kathy Robbins, knows the authour's name. At Random House the book's editor, Daniel Menaker, and publisher Harold Evans are contractually prohibited even from speculating about the writer's identity. Evans swears that he does not know.

The book, which depicts scenes from the Clinton campaign so precisely that White House officials say the author had to have been present at several events witnessed only by close campaign aides, first came to the publisher's attention last April, the publishing source said.

Robbins, a top New York agent, brought about 50,000 words of the book to a breakfast with Evans. From the beginning, the agent insisted on anonymity for her client, saying she would take the book elsewhere if Random House did not agree to a contract with no one listed as author. Menaker edited the book by mail.

The contract was in the $200,000 range, the source said. Robbins delivered each portion of the novel in a plain brown envelope.

Although the publishers cannot speculate publicly about the author, they are now said to be convinced that the writer is a woman. The novel is narrated by "Henry Burton", a black political operative modeled after Clinton aide George Stephanopoulos.

The book's first printing of 62,000 — a large figure for a Washington novel — sold briskly last month. Random House has shipped 177,000 copies and the book is in its sixth printing. The novel was No. 2 on last week's Wall Street Journal bestseller list and No. 7 on the New York Times fiction list. It is top of the Washington Post best-selling fiction list.

Although the Finger the Author parlor game seems centered in Washington and New York, the book is selling well across the country.

From Stephanopoulos, who has been calling dozens of friends and acquaintances in a persistent effort to sniff out the identity, to book parties for Anonymous, the curiosity is almost painfully intense.

Carla Cohen, co-owner of Politics and Prose bookstore in Washington, is planning a party on February 9. "We're going to have as many of the people who have been mentioned as possible authors read a paragraph from the book," She said. "And then we're going to vote."

Random House has been milking the situation. Reporters bumbling after Anonymous were even offered an on-line interview with the author; Time magazine accepted. Anonymous discussed the novel, but rebuffed all questions deemed "autobiographical."

Early speculation focused on writers on Robbins's client list, including political reporters Michael Kelly and Sidney Blumenthal of the New Yorker, and Joe Klein of Newsweek. They, along with dozens of other campaign journalists, have denied authorship.

Inside the White House, fingers pointed at a series of young aides considered to have had good access to the Clintons and a strong sense of story. Political consultant Paul Begala, former deputy treasury secretary Roger Altman, White House policy adviser Rob Bourstin and Stephanopoulos himself have been accused of being Anonymous. None owns up to the book.

In Search of the Elusive Idi Amin

Ted Gup

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, Idi Amin, the notorious former dictator of Uganda, seized power and began his eight-year reign of terror. Whatever happened to Idi Amin? Before I began my private search for the elusive dictator some months ago, I imagined him living the life of a fugitive, hiding out in some remote corner of the earth, fearing extradition or assassination. I could not have been more wrong.

Amin has always held a fascination for me. He seemed the very incarnation of evil. Some wrote him off as an arrogant buffoon with a fourth-grade education — all bluster, no bite — but that was before his January 25, 1971 coup d'etat, before he turned torture into a state-sanctioned business and before his innumerable stomach-turning atrocities came to light.

For those too young to remember, Amin had as many as 300,000 of his people butchered, exiled some 50,000 Asian residents, bankrupted his nation and created for himself a lasting place as the stereotypical African despot.

He once proclaimed himself "Conqueror of the British Empire," crowned himself the national heavyweight boxing champion and routinely scored goals on the soccer field as the opposing goalie stepped aside to oblige him out of fear for his life. Amin praised Adolf Hitler and boasted about a direct dialogue with God.

Back in 1972, my grandfather — already in his 80s — spent a night in one of Amin's jails in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. His crime: refusing a border guard's order to surrender his Ugandan currency before exiting the country.

For that my grandfather was thrown in a dungeon. The next day he persuaded a Ugandan magistrate that he meant no disrespect, that he simply wanted to have some souvenirs of his stay in Uganda to share with his grandchildren. His jailing made national news in the United States, and my grandfather lived on to embellish his story of Ugandan imprisonment over his remaining years. Of course, most who entered Amin's prisons told no stories.

In the old days, dictators were held accountable for their crimes. They were shot or hanged and spat upon in the final act — à la Benito Mussolini. That was before the current Age of Impunity, when the likes of Haiti's Baby Doc Duvalier could retire to France, its Raoul Cedras to Panama and the Philippine's Ferdinand Marcos could languish in Hawaii. Against such a forgiving landscape, who could blame Serbia's Radovan Karadzic if he scoffs at talk of a war-crimes tribunal and dreams of his own Gucci exile?

But what of Amin? Just what did happen to him since fleeing Uganda in 1979? Was he still alive? Was he living in squalor or sinful excess on Uganda's purloined treasury? From Ugandan newspaper reporters in Washington and Kampala I learned that Amin was in Saudi Arabia, where he has occasionally surfaced.

He'd been there for years, a protected guest of the state. His invitation to that country was based in no small measure on Amin's deep Muslim faith and on his pledge to keep a low profile. Several Saudi reporters in Riyadh told me that Amin, now approaching 70, was living the good life in Jeddah. My ultimate goal was to talk to Amin and to ask what burdens of exile he carried.

It took me a while to confirm Amin's whereabouts from the State Department, possibly because it does not want to embarrass the Saudis. If that oil-rich nation chooses to extend a hospitable hand to an ex-tyrant in need, the United States is perfectly willing to feign ignorance. One Saudi official I met volunteered that the matter is sensitive. Amin has generally obliged the King by keeping his mouth shut and avoiding the press, no small feat for a man given to such bombast.

An American lawyer based in Jeddah tells me he often bumped into the 300-pound Amin in the aisles of a supermarket. "A number of my friends say they have met him there in the frozen food aisle. They say it was just like meeting Elvis."

INDEED, in Jeddah it seems, Amin sightings are commonplace and the former dictator is accorded near-celebrity status. But to most Americans, he is little more than a footnote to history, a monster whose meglomania amused us at times in spite of ourselves. But to many Ugandans, he remains what he has always been — a threat. There are always rumors in Kampala of him attempting a comeback and of the nightmare playing itself out again — the bodies floating down the Nile, grieving families paying for the body parts of loved ones that they might give them a decent burial.

Ugandan officials told me that Amin is deeply homesick for his native land, but unwilling to face the inevitable charges and inquiries that await him there.

After a wait of several weeks, a contact of mine in Kampala returned to me with a slip of paper on which was penned Amin's home phone number in Jeddah. I called late that evening. A woman answered. I identified myself as a writer and explained that I was eager to interview Amin.

"You are calling him to speak about what?" she asked. I could hear a young child cooing in the background, perhaps one of the 40 Amin is said to have fathered. I said that I wanted to talk to Amin about his life after Uganda. "I'll check to see if he's in," said the woman. In the background I could plainly hear her talking to a man who answered with a thunderous voice.

A moment later the woman returned, saying Amin was out. "Any message?"

Now what kind of message does one leave for a despot in exile? How about, "I wanted to ask him if his conscience kept him awake at night." Right. Instead, I said I would call back, which I did, every other night for two weeks. Always it was the same exchange. "He's out. I don't know when he is to return. Do you wish to leave a message?"

Finally my quest to speak with Idi Amin came to an end, the result of sheer exhaustion and a swelling telephone bill. Ordinarily, I'd leave it at that.

But Amin was a man of monstrous cruelty and it seems an anomaly of history that he is not wilting in prison or cowering in fear of extradition, but instead is seen pushing a cart down the frozen food aisle or tooling about a seaside city in a Chevy Caprice. For him, there has been no call to judgment. The best that I can do is share with the world his home phone number: +966-2-693-3178. *Sic semper tyrannis.*

Japan PM's House Is Not a Home

Kevin Sullivan in Tokyo

AMERICAN presidential candidates dream of their first night in the White House, wandering about in history's footsteps and drinking in the grand view from the bedroom window.

New Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto toured his soon-to-be official residence last month and concluded, "It sure looks uncomfortable."

Japan's version of the White House, its official prime ministerial residence, is, by all accounts, a dump. Hashimoto is only the ninth of Japan's 24 prime ministers since World War II to agree to live there. One newspaper said that it would be charitable to describe the place as Third World, because even Third World leaders "manage to stay dry when they're home during the rain."

In addition to the leaky roof, various premiers and their wives over the years have reported sightings of "rats the size of marmots," various strains of lizards and amorous cats screeching all night.

Mutsuko Miki, the widow of former prime minister Takeo Miki (1974-76), wrote in her memoirs that rats crawled around her bedroom floor at night and three-inch-long cockroaches "crawled over our toothbrushes."

"It is not a fit place for humankind to live," Miki once remarked.

The residence, in downtown Tokyo, is a one-story addition connected by a long hallway to the office building where the premier and his staff work. They were both built in 1929, designed by a government architect trying his best to pay homage to Frank Lloyd Wright, who designed the original Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. The Imperial generally received more compliments.

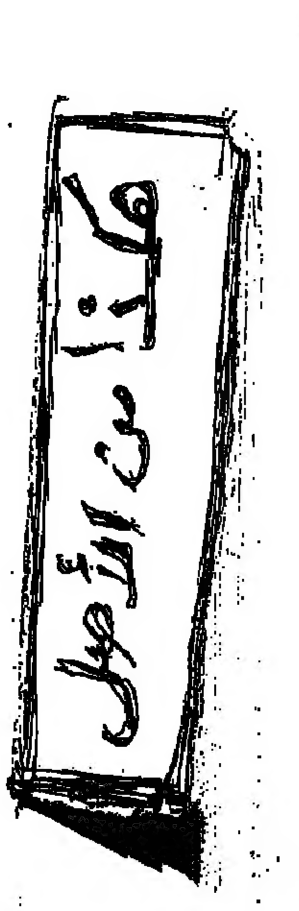
In fairness, the office building does have a couple of lovely rooms where the prime minister can entertain in style.

President Clinton probably won't be hanging out much at Hashimoto's place when he comes for a state visit in April. Clinton will probably stay at Tokyo's fancier quarters for official visitors, the Akasaka Guest House, one of the world's grand structures, which makes the White House seem like a cottage.

Yasuhiro Nakasone, who was prime minister from 1982 to 1987, so hated his official residence that he drew up grand plans for a replacement that would rival the White House in scope and technology.

But Nakasone's plan would have involved moving the headquarters of a couple of Japan's big bureaucracies, and big bureaucracies don't budge easily.

Some people think a modest prime minister's home is appropriate in a nation that prides itself on humility. "The home of the prime minister is close to the center of Japan's politics, but it doesn't have to be gorgeous at all," said Takashi Sakaizawa, an architect and interior designer.





Wrestling With Words

Jane Howard

TRYING TO SAVE PIGGY SNEED
By John Irving
Arcade. 432pp. $21.95

THE EIGHT exuberant novels John Irving began producing in 1969, like his handsomely published new collection Trying To Save Piggy Sneed, abound with evidence of his passions. His work has brought him a degree of prosperity he never foresaw back in his student days at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, when he confided to Kurt Vonnegut, his teacher and mentor, that he "wasn't going to make myself miserable by even imagining that I would make a living from my writing."

"You may be surprised," replied Vonnegut. "I think capitalism is going to treat you okay." So it has, and in Trying To Save Piggy Sneed, we are told what it's like to be John Irving at 53 — to own, for example, both an apartment in Toronto and a mountaintop property in Vermont where "the damn house has six bathrooms."

He'd have us believe he's still the same conscientious, self-doubting recovered dyslexic he was before the phenomenal sales of The World According To Garp. Beginning with that fourth novel, which appeared in 1978, he has become not only a very rich North American, "cautiously" admitting to an annual income of at least half a million dollars, but a virtual cult figure in Europe, which he visits frequently with his second wife cum literary agent and their 4-year-old son.

His fiction, often set in Vienna or New England or both, is memorably peopled, or one might as accurately say mammaled, with troubled bears, dogs who have names like Sorrow, and humans who typically include vulnerable children, fiercely doting parents, wronged but valiant women, and eccentrics like the smelly garbage collector of this new book's title memoir, who was befriended by Irving's noble grandmother but cruelly taunted by the author and his boyhood friends.

This book's middle memoir, "The Imaginary Girlfriend" contains Irving's most affecting new material, recounting among other things his lifelong devotion, both as a competitor and a coach, to wrestling. "When you love something, you have the capacity to bore everyone about why — it doesn't matter why . . . the best answer to why I love wrestling is that it was the first thing I was any good at." Along with Kirk Douglas and H. Norman Schwarzkopf (but not, Irving points out, his fellow novelist Ken Kesey) he has been selected for the Hall of Outstanding Americans in the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in Stillwater, Oklahoma. More than anything it pleases him that his first two sons both won the New England Class A wrestling title.

The memoirs are followed by six previously published short stories, each followed by an afterword. Of these the most engaging are "Interior Space," which begins "George Ronkers was a young urologist in a university town — a lucrative situation nowadays;" his own favorite "The Pension Grillparzer," written as part of The World According To Garp when Irving was 34 and "already knew I was a novelist, not a short-story writer;" and "Almost in Iowa," with its captivating observation, "There is more to Ohio than you think; there are more exits to Sandusky than seem reasonable."

The collection ends with three also republished pieces of "homage," one to Gunther Grass, whom Irving regards as "simply the most powerful and versatile writer alive," and salutes for his outspokenness against the "many-faceted moral bankruptcy of the Christian West," and two to Charles Dickens, admired among many other reasons for his "nearly constant moral outrage." Irving indeed finds Grass "Dickensian — in the sense that he combines darkly comic satire with the most earthly love, the most positively domestic affection." Grass, it turns out, has become a friend, who told Irving "easily more than 10 years ago," that he was worried because "'You don't seem quite as angry as you used to be.' This was a good warning, I've never forgotten it."

All kinds of things can rile this author. On a flight to Paris, he ordered a glass of red wine with his fish because "I despise white wine." Others may merely dislike effete stuff; he downright despises it. But to be fair, he also justly despises the "notorious anti-Semitism" of Vienna, where he first lived as a student. If only he'd tone down his reminders of the prestigious company he sometimes keeps. Barbara Bush meant to ask Irving to dinner, as President Reagan and Dan Quayle both did, "because I was one of her favorite authors." At Irving's second wedding the late Robertson Davies read from the King James Bible; it's a wonder Dickens wasn't somehow there, too.

But along with these big names, Irving drops many that most readers won't recognize — those of beloved coaches, and otherwise unsung friends whom he makes us wish we too knew or had known. Nor does he take his good fortune for granted. Fame and money, he has learned, can bring resentment and enemies, who, he quotes Thomas Mann, "are, of course, the necessary concomitant of any robust life, the very proof of its strength." He also notes that "it is frequently the role of lesser wits to demean the accomplishments of writers with more sizable audiences, and reputations, than their own." That would seem to take care of readers, let alone critics, who may feel that Irving novels rely too predictably on the swaggering, the grotesque — "my penchant for the bizarre," as he says reviewers call it — and the randomly violent.

Irving is most helpful when he describes his own formula for his two abiding pursuits: "one-eighth talent and seven-eighths discipline." In both writing and wrestling, the obligatory thing is "repetition without cease . . . until the moves become second nature. I have never thought of myself as a 'born' writer — any more than I think of myself as a 'natural' athlete, or even a good one. What I am is a good rewriter, I never get anything right the first time — I just know how to revise, and revise."

European Autopsy

Bettina Drew

THE ANATOMY LESSON
By John David Morley
St. Martin's. 184pp. $21.95

AN EXPATRIATE living in Munich, John David Morley is known to European and American literary connoisseurs as a writer who merits serious attention. His 1994 The Feast Of Fools was the first novel in a language other than German to win the City of Munich Literary Prize, and he has written to wide acclaim on subjects as diverse as imprisonment and modern Japanese culture.

This new novel concerns the sad cultural fallout of Northern Europe, the aimless young people one sees in the cities of Holland and Germany and more recently in Prague, the ones who wear leather jackets, black boots, and earrings through their lips and noses, who sleep in abandoned buildings and do drugs when they feel the need to. But The Anatomy Lesson is no grunge novel. Taking its title from Rembrandt's famous rendering of a 17th-century autopsy, it is a serious meditation on despair and loss and our inability to really know the people we love.

Kiddo, a young American expatriate in Amsterdam, is a dropout with no prospects, a "welfare brat" who lives off the generosity of the Dutch state. He's a paid-in-full member of Generation X, and in the world as he knows it middle-class fathers rape their daughters, parents physically and morally abuse each other, and young people die quickly from overdoses or something else. In this world, on some days "almost every window we pass seems to be stacked to the ceiling with whips, dildoes and sex mags, [and] you feel beaten up noticing this stuff."

After spending their teenage years apart because the family's divorce left one parent in America while the other went back to Holland, Kiddo and his adored older brother, Morton, a gifted engineering student, are reunited when Kiddo is 17. They resume their childhood closeness, bonding so tightly that they fall in love with the same girl, Pietje, who sleeps with them both at the same time. Later Morton heads to M.I.T., but once in America he takes off on his own, scarcely writing to Kiddo. And when he does return to Amsterdam, it is because doctors have diagnosed him with terminal cancer.

Arranging to donate his body to science, Morton requests that Kiddo and the other unsentimental kids at his bedside vigil attend his autopsy. It is a gruesome, harrowing experience, in which Morton's insides are revealed to be as aged as those of an old man. Later, Kiddo discovers his dead brother's strange fascination with Rembrandt's painting: "The star of the anatomy lesson is the corpse. You can't take your eyes off the corpse . . . You want to take the corpse apart and look inside." And as Kiddo begins to mine his past and to try to really understand his brother, he discovers a dark side to Morton, a side so shocking that it throws Kiddo's entire identity — and even his life — into question.

This penetrating psychological novel conveys a sense of individual apartness so pervasive it is crushing. And yet there are faint whiffs of Freudian familiarity, hope and purpose. This little book is a gem.

Adventures in Time and Space

T. H. Watkins

DINOSAUR IN A HAYSTACK
Reflections in Natural History
By Stephen Jay Gould
Harmony. 480pp. $25

THE FIRST THING you should do when reviewing a collection of Stephen Jay Gould essays is try to explain its title (remember Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes or The Panda's Thumb?). Among other good reasons for doing so, the attempt can give the reader some notion of the sometimes convoluted paths that Harvard's Agassiz Professor of Zoology takes as he artfully leads us through tangled landscapes of scientific, literary and philosophical geography like a pedagogical Natty Bumppo, feet snapping no twigs, swift, birdlike glances darting hither and thither through the intellectual brush to see what new wonders he might show us.

So here we go: For generations after Darwin first articulated it, Gould writes in the 12th essay in this collection; science accepted the theory that evolution took place gradually, the strands and varieties of life rising up or passing into extinction in a kind of ponderous biological waltz danced over hundreds of millions of years. There seemed to be no evidence to support the idea that new forms of life could appear as startling biological explosions, like those which apparently erupted over a measly 10-million-year period beginning some 543 million years ago, or that some extinctions might be sudden, catastrophic events like that which removed the dinosaurs and half of all marine invertebrate species about 65 million years ago.

But the "gradualists," Gould says, based their conclusions on mere samplings from the fossil record, and this, he maintains, provided insufficient evidence. In 1979, when physicist Luis Alvarez and a few colleagues concluded that the great extirpation of 65 million years ago was the result of an enormous asteroid colliding with the earth, paleontologists were forced to dig deeper and more thoroughly in an effort either to disprove or validate the theory. And, sure enough, fossil evidence was unearthed to support the idea that something big and sudden had happened to push the dinosaurs and all those marine species into the black hole of extinction. "The obvious analogy to the usual cliche suggests itself," Gould writes. "If I search for a single needle in a haystack by sampling ten handfuls of hay, I have very little chance of locating the object. But if I take apart the stack, straw by straw, I will recover the needle." Or the dinosaur.

From this and other evidence, Gould helped to formulate a new theory of evolutionary process called "punctuated equilibrium," a kind of catastrophism for moderns.

BUT THAT is not the point of this particular dinosaur essay. No, what Gould is saying here is that Alvarez's asteroid theory and its paleontological results illustrate what Darwin meant when he wrote that "all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service!" This phrase, Gould remarks, "is indelibly impressed on the portal to my psyche."

As that single essay demonstrates, it is a mighty wide portal and a most interesting psyche that are revealed in this rich and varied collection, compiled from columns first published in Natural History magazine, where Gould has appeared every month for more than 20 years.

He has called himself a simple "tradesman" whose "business" is evolutionary biology, but there are few fields of learning he will not mine, from astronomy to literature, whether it is to promote the year 2000 — not 2001 — as the first of the next millennium, to analyze why engravers always seemed to draw the whorls in a snail from right to left even though snails are constructed left to right, or to reject the fulminations of "Creationists" that Darwinian evolution is not "scientific" because it can't be objectively tested. Nor is he bashful about using less academic materials, from analogies to baseball (a bit of an obsession) to moments from his not entirely serene childhood. "I was viewed as a nerd and misfit on that ultimate field of vocational decision — the school playground," he writes in "Dinomania" (my personal favorite among the essays). "I was called 'Fossil Face'."

There are scientists who write with greater grace of language (E. O. Wilson, Gould's colleague at Harvard among them), but few are equal to Gould as a master of the essay form, and none is so polymathically fearless, sublimely curious or quite so fully entranced with what he has found in the past, present and potential future of life's long (punctuated) journey.

Greeks and Turks at loggerheads again

Nicole Pope in Istanbul and Didier Kunz in Athens

THE NIGHT of January 30 was an eventful one in the Aegean Sea, when a territorial dispute between Greece and Turkey culminated in a brief intervention by Turkish marines. It was only after swift mediation by President Bill Clinton and his assistant secretary of state, Richard Holbrooke, who led the Bosnia peace negotiations, that the heat was taken out of the situation.

The United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the Nato Secretary General, Javier Solana, had also intervened in an attempt to persuade the two parties to settle the matter amicably.

The temperature suddenly began to rise on January 28, when Athens sent a handful of troops to a tiny uninhabited islet off the Turkish coast, called Imia by Greece and Kardak by Turkey.

There followed two days of sabre-rattling by both countries, with spectacular attempts at intimidation in the air above the Aegean and manoeuvres by warships near the islet, which is not much larger than a football pitch. The standoff could easily have deteriorated into an armed clash.

On January 30, the Turkish prime minister, Tansu Ciller, said that her country would not allow a foreign flag to sully Turkish soil. She also called for a negotiated and peaceful solution to the crisis.

At 1.40am the next morning, a score of Turkish troops boarded dinghies at the tip of the Bodrum peninsula, near the Dodecanese islands, and sailed for the islet. Without a shot being fired, they landed on a tiny rock near Imia.

After Clinton's intervention, Greece and Turkey withdrew their troops and pulled back their warships. A search was going on for the three people who went missing after a Greek helicopter came down in the sea during the pullout, apparently as a result of a technical problem.

Greece says that it acquired Imia and neighbouring islets in 1947 along with the Dodecanese islands, which were ceded to it by Italy. Turkey claims that Kardak and its neighbours were not included in the 1947 agreement, and that since they are situated 38 nautical miles from the Turkish coast and 55 nautical miles from the nearest Greek island under international law they belong to Turkey.

It is difficult to understand how two countries which, despite their historic rivalries, are allies within Nato could have clashed in this way over a handful of uninhabited islets whose only recognised value is as a picnic spot for tourists cruising the Aegean.

The nationalist media in both countries are largely responsible for having whipped up the crisis. It began in December last year, when a Turkish boat ran on to the rocks. Probably for financial rather than political reasons, it refused an offer of assistance from a Greek trawler, claiming that the islet was in Turkish territory.

The diplomatic notes exchanged by the two countries would have quickly solved the problem, had not their respective media further inflamed the situation.

Both the Turkish and Greek governments were in a position of weakness — the new Greek prime minister, Costas Simitis, due to take up office on January 31, had yet to prove himself, while Ciller was having considerable difficulty in forming a coalition government following December's elections — and were forced to respond energetically to "patriotic" pressure from the media.

Troubled waters . . . A team of Turkish commandos and a Turkish journalist return to Turkey last week after landing on the disputed island of Imia in a midnight operation

The territorial waters and status of the Aegean islands have long been a bone of contention between Turkey and Greece. In 1987, a squabble over maritime mining rights almost triggered a war between the two countries.

Turkey has refused to sign an agreement which, technically, would give Greece a territorial zone of 12 nautical miles off all its islands in the Aegean. According to the Turks, who insist on maintaining the present limit of six miles, such a solution would turn the Aegean into "a Greek lake".

The Turkish foreign minister, Deniz Baykal, has expressed satisfaction at the solution to the latest crisis. "We only wanted one thing: the withdrawal of soldiers, ships and flags," he said.

The Turkish government has repeated that it would like to have talks with Greece over the status of 1,000 similar islets scattered over the Aegean whose ownership has not been clearly defined, and to resolve the question of territorial waters.

When Simitis was officially confirmed as Greek prime minister on January 31 by a vote of confidence in his general policy statement, the parliamentary debate was dominated by the dispute over Imia.

Simitis was hard pressed by the opposition as well as by members of his own Pasok party. He explained that he had chosen to avoid "a wholesale conflict" with Turkey because it would have not only involved casualties but put the issue of negotiations with Turkey over the status of the Greek islands in the Aegean back on the agenda — something Athens resolutely refuses to do.

"Greek sovereignty is not negotiable, and it was in the interests of our country not to fall into the trap laid by the Turks," Simitis said. In an attempt to reassure Greeks, he added that "Imia is and will remain Greek", and that the government "reserved the right to raise flags wherever it wanted, however it wanted and whenever it wanted. We would have gone to war if necessary."

But he also used more conciliatory language and reminded parliament that Greece's policies should be guided by good sense and logic, as well as political and tactical considerations.

Simitis insisted that he had not negotiated the withdrawal of the Greek flag from Imia with Holbrooke, who is due to lead a 10-day mission to the region in February. He will face an uphill task. Although Greek and Turkish naval forces have returned to base the root problem has not been solved.

Simitis also warned his European partners of the dangers of admitting Turkey to the European Union. The following day Pauline Green, president of the socialist group in the European Parliament, criticised Turkey for its attempts to redraw the frontiers of southeast Europe.

(February 1 and 2)

South African giant causes disquiet among its neighbours

Jean-Pierre Langellier

LESS than two years after Nelson Mandela's victory at the polls, the political landscape in southern Africa has begun to shift. South Africa's status as a regional giant is beginning to worry its neighbours, who suspect that Pretoria may start listening to the siren voices of hegemony.

Yesterday a foe, now a friend, South Africa could paradoxically turn out to be more of a problem than ever to the former "front-line" states, now that economic supremacy has replaced ideological and military hostility.

Politically, South Africa has adopted a low profile. Far from embarking on a human-rights crusade or committing itself spectacularly, as some had hoped or feared, to support democratic forces in Africa, it has been careful not to be seen to be taking the moral high ground.

With the exception of Mandela's recent call for trade sanctions against the Nigerian junta, the lack of political interest in black Africa shown by him and his government colleagues has sometimes verged on indifference. But that has not prevented neighbouring countries dreading the imponderables and risks of instability likely to be ushered in by the post-Mandela era.

Economically, the parameters of the relationship are wholly conditioned by South Africa's overwhelming industrial, trading and demographic superiority over its regional neighbours. Its gross domestic product is four times larger than the total GDP of its 11 partners in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The average South African is 35 times richer than the average Mozambican.

South Africa's economic superiority takes many forms. Its networks in such areas as railways, roads, energy, banking and telecommunications straddle the continent from the Cape of Good Hope to southern Zaire. And soon its cultural impact will be boosted by television.

It enjoys numerous advantages over its neighbours: lower transport costs, more advanced technology, a more efficient infrastructure, more sophisticated financial instruments, a more experienced and dynamic private sector, and a much larger domestic market.

South Africa's central bank enjoys de facto control of the monetary policies of three neighbouring countries, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. It is an industrialised country dealing with developing countries, mostly selling them manufactured products in exchange for raw materials.

Some of South Africa's neighbours who had supported the African National Congress's struggle had hoped that they would get something in return in the post-apartheid era.

They expected the country led by Mandela to offer them at least a generous and comprehensive partnership, if not financial aid. They have discovered instead that South Africa has a short memory and is guided by blatant pragmatism and exclusive concern for its national interests.

The peoples of southern Africa are beginning to have mixed feelings about South Africa. They are delighted with the advantages it offers as a source of remunerative outlets and a place where their élites can be trained. But they are also afraid that Pretoria may start throwing its weight about.

One diplomat believes the SADC may come to resemble, even if only remotely, the old-style Comecon, with a dominant centre and kowtowing satellites. Because it is so biased in favour of a single country, it will never be able to resemble the European Union.

South Africa seems reluctant to move any faster towards the goals the SADC has set itself, such as the transformation of the community into a free trade and travel zone.

Because it fears that the lifting of customs barriers will work in favour of its neighbours, which have lower production costs because of cheaper manpower, Pretoria has taken refuge behind protectionist barriers.

Zimbabwe has been the first to suffer from this uncooperative attitude. South Africa has done everything it can to ensure that the renegotiation of an old customs agreement penalising Zimbabwe's textile industry drags on and on. "The South Africans aren't playing to the rules," a Zimbabwean minister says with some bitterness. "It's becoming a real source of frustration for us."

As a result, the trading boom within the region has worked chiefly in Pretoria's favour, though it is true that South Africa's dynamism has had beneficial effects on its neighbours. Zimbabwe, for example, gets 75 per cent of its tourists and 50 per cent of its investment from South Africa.

There is another reason why Pretoria has been holding back: it fears that immigration will get out of control. South Africa has always, even during the darkest days of apartheid rule, acted as a magnet to the poor and the unemployed in neighbouring countries.

According to official figures, it has 3-5 million illegal immigrants out of a total population of about 40 million. Mandela has threatened to crack down even harder on people entering the country illegally (now mostly poor Mozambicans).

The unwelcome influx of immigrants will slow down only if South Africa's neighbours take off economically. That is why it is in the interests of the Mandela government to show a little more generosity towards its regional partners.

(January 27)

Rebel who broke audience sound barrier

Jacques-Emmanuel Fousnaquer reassesses the Franco-American composer Edgard Varèse



ON DECEMBER 2, 1954, Hermann Scherchen conducted what turned out to be a legendary first performance of Edgard Varèse's Déserts. It was the first time French radio broadcast a concert in stereo. The radio announcer was 29-year-old Pierre Boulez.

The beginning of the performance passed without incident, but at the point in the composition when the orchestra fell quiet and was replaced by an electro-acoustic tape, all hell broke loose. Within 15 minutes the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées had been turned into a battlefield. Nothing like it had happened since the first performance of Igor Stravinsky's Le Sacre du Printemps 41 years earlier.

The next day, one critic suggested Varèse should be "sent to the electric chair". The composer Iannis Xenakis remembers Varèse, later, weeping as he listened to a tape of the concert.

Where does Varèse's stock stand today? That is something which it will be easier to judge once his complete works have been performed by the Orchestre National de Lyon in a season of Varèse concerts — the first of its kind — that will run till June 17.

It is by no means certain that Déserts will seem any less strident today. Thirty years after the composer's death, his music refuses to acquire the reassuring patina that so often eventually envelops the most daring of compositions.

His work is "classical" only in the sense that Antonin Artaud's or Lautréamont's writings are classical, probably because he was one of the few 20th century composers to have completely rethought the very notion of music, with the result that he came to be seen as an eternal rebel and inveterate loner.

After working in musical forms inherited from Claude Debussy and Albert Roussel, whom he admired, Varèse built up an *oeuvre* where, "as in Picasso's drawings, two incisive lines are enough to enable one to straddle the universe" (Fernand Ouellette on Varèse's composition Hyperprism).

The beauty of Offrandes and the rugged poetry of Ecuatorial do not detract from the radicality of Varèse's musical approach, which had no equivalent at the time. For him, the essence of composition was not the note or the scale, but pure sound — a sound that had to be organised and amplified, and whose riches and contrasts needed to be exalted.

Varèse devoured books on acoustics and liked to describe himself as a man of science. His conception of music being projected into space apparently came to him when, during a performance of Beethoven's Seventh at the Salle Pleyel, he suddenly thought he could sense a "fourth dimension".

Varèse's great tragedy, more than the scandal caused by Déserts, was that he lived at a time when the musical resources he needed were not yet available. He dreamt in vain of futuristic sound-producing contraptions and electro-acoustic devices. In their absence, he filled his scores with rare instruments and barrages of brass and percussion.

In 1933, he persuaded the engineer Léon Thérémin to invent a new instrument for his Ecuatorial. It was called the *thérémin* — and soon forgotten. In the thirties and forties (it was only in 1954 that Pierre Schaeffer invited him to come and work at his Club d'Essai in the French radio building), Varèse was reduced to pleading to be allowed to use a corner of one of the few recording studios being built in the United States.

Varèse's career was blighted by his own excessively self-critical attitude, and littered with accidents and abortive projects. In 1961, for instance, four years before his death, he destroyed the most important work of his youth, the symphonic poem Bourgogne, whose first performance in 1910 got an enthusiastic reception from Richard Strauss.

Other early works, including Oedipus und die Sphinx, an opera based on a libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, were destroyed by fire in Berlin, where he had left them in store before emigrating to New York in 1915. He took out American citizenship in 1927, but a year later returned to Paris.

In 1929, Varèse embarked on The One All Alone, a huge circus-cum-opera, in collaboration with Alejo Carpentier, Robert Desnos and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes. It was probably the same project that later ended up, after being rewritten by Artaud, as Il n'y a Plus de Firmament.

Had it ever seen the light of day, it would have been a spectacular show, according to the photographer Brassaï: "Thirteen pianolas, with a few other noise-making instruments, were supposed to perform the sidereal music of this opera. To finish off the work — and the spectators — Varèse wanted to dazzle people's eyes after deafening their ears."

Varèse also dreamt of joining forces with André Malraux to compose a vast choral symphony. It was to be called Espace. All that remains of the project is Etude pour Espace, a composition first performed in New York in 1947, recorded on 78 and never played again.

Varèse was not a composer who inspired a school of followers. His singularity, combined with the fact that recognition came to him very late in life, meant he did little teaching. The only person who could truly be called his pupil was André Jolivet (1905-74).

After the war Varèse enjoyed a brief but glorious rehabilitation, and in 1950 was invited to teach at the prestigious Darmstadt school, where his students included Luigi Nono.

Later, in 1958, when he was preparing his Poème Electronique for the Brussels Universal Exhibition, he worked with Xenakis, who is probably the only living composer to have been deeply influenced by him.

A lesser-known aspect of Varèse is his interest in jazz. Few are aware, for instance, that Charlie Parker, shortly before his death, sought out Varèse in the hope of taking lessons from him, or that the jazz flautist Eric Dolphy performed in his Densité 21,5.

Last week Graphs And Time, a piece originally written by Varèse for Charlie Mingus and his band, was given its first European performance by Johnny Reinhard. Its one-page score consists solely of graphs, and allows the performers considerable scope as regards improvisation and the choice of instruments.

The season of concerts in Lyon is accompanied by an exhibition called "Edgard Varèse, le Libérateur de Sons", which is on at the Auditorium de Lyon until April 5. In Varèse's case there is no equivalent of the Schoenberg foundation, where all archives relating to the composer are centralised. The organisers of the exhibition had to approach many different people and request loans from private collections, in particular the Jolivet collection.

MOST of the material, however, belongs to Chou Wen-Chung, the Chinese-American musician — and disciple of Varèse — who on the composer's death was put in charge of looking after his archives and supervising performances of his works. He also completed Varèse's last major composition, Nocturnal.

Now 72, Chou Wen-Chung continues to be one of the principal keepers of the Varèse flame, particularly since the death of the composer's widow, Louise, in 1991. Some of the documents he has lent the exhibition are on show for the first time in France. Along with the concerts, they enable one to gain a more accurate and more vivid idea of the man who, on his death, prompted the following farewell from Boulez: "Your time is over, and it is beginning."

(January 31)

Duets for Saraswati

Catherine Bédarida in Delhi

THE Delhi-based classical Indian singers Rajan and Sajan Misra have been performing together since their childhood, which they spent in Varanasi, a centre of religious, classical and popular song.

They grew up in a family deeply imbued with a 300-year-old musical tradition. At the age of five they started taking lessons from their music-teacher father along with other pupils who, according to an old practice, would come to live in their teacher's house for several months while learning their skills.

Rajan and Sajan gave their first concert when they were 11 and six: "In Varanasi, each temple regularly organised mini-concerts. We often played at them." They now perform in concert halls in India and, less often, abroad.

They have made several records of *raga* (the most widespread classical form) and songs in honour of Ganesh, the popular elephant-headed god, and Shiva, the god represented by a stone phallus emerging from female sexual organs. The two brothers are particularly devoted to Saraswati, the beautiful goddess of the arts and sciences, who is usually represented carrying a stringed instrument.

The brothers live under the same roof with their families, and they teach their three children how to sing. During the day they also receive pupils, some of whom pay no fee, as is required by tradition.

"A generation ago, local princes would place a large house at the disposal of a talented music teacher," says Rajan. "His pupils used to come and live in it. That way he could then hear them practising all day long and see how they were getting on."

Duet singing is an ancient tradition in Varanasi, as it is in Pakistan, where it was revived by the Khan brothers in the early sixties. "You need to be very close to be able to harmonise your feelings and sing duets successfully," say the Misras.

Another singer, Wasif Dagar, explains *raga* as follows: "The performer is not bound by any rules. He can improvise. He then becomes like a painter, with a palette of colours, the actual notes of the piece, and a canvas, rhythms and forms, from which he cannot depart. But with those same elements he can compose several different pictures."

Dagar, who gives private lessons in Delhi and sometimes teaches at music workshops in France, says pupils feel soothed by this kind of music. "It's a kind of sound yoga," he says.



Classical Indian repertoire has no written scores. It is passed on orally, which explains why the teaching process is so important. When the princely patrons disappeared, schools took their place and government grants were set up to help pupils from less well-off families. These schools teach dance, music and singing, the three notions contained in the word *sangeet*.

In Delhi they are almost all located in the area round Mandi House Chowk. It is there that Birju Maharaj, the Kathak dance teacher invited to the 1995 Avignon Festival, runs his National Drama School.

The Mudgal family's school gives lessons to 1,200 amateurs, a quarter of whom are children. Madhavi, the remarkable woman dancer who was also present at Avignon, teaches the subtleties of *odissi*, one of the seven classical styles. Her brother Madhup trains male and female singers separately. The top floor is given over to the teaching of three important instruments used in Indian music: the sitar, the tabla and the flute. Pupils pay 100 rupees ($3) a month for three lessons of one hour each.

"About 60 per cent of them just come along for fun," says Madhup. "They can be anybody from bus drivers to university students . . . Only 3 or 4 per cent actually become professional performers. Because music is omnipresent in Indian films and widely available in recorded form, the 'natural' voice of amateurs — the voice they have before they start learning how to sing — has improved."

People can hear the great performers thanks to recording companies like Music Today, which was set up in 1990 by the weekly India Today and sells its products either by mail order or through small outlets such as tobacconists and village bazaars. Cassettes account for 75 per cent of sales, as CD players are not very widespread in India.

Music Today's products are excellent from the point of view of cassette quality, sound recording and, above all, musical interest. But they do not sell as well as "variety". The company has therefore also brought out series of recordings it describes as "easy listening" — "romantic" or relaxing music, or compositions using synthesisers on top of real instruments. "It's India's New Age," says Anand Prasad, head of Music Today.

The number of students at music schools increased appreciably after the broadcast of a television series that showed leading performers of classical Indian music in a favourable light.

"That was before satellite came in," says Madhup with a smile. "There were then only two TV channels, which meant programmes were watched by millions and millions of viewers. The series glamorised our profession. I have to warn prospective students that learning music is a long and gruelling process."

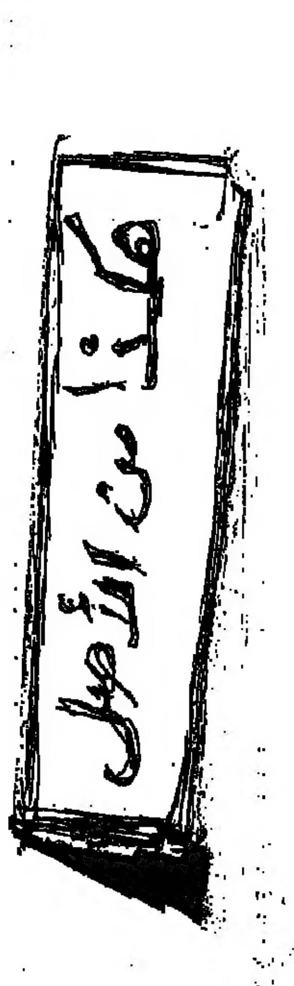
But once they prove they can really perform, he passes on the traditional message: "You should perform first and foremost for your own enjoyment, for it's only when a performer is happy that listeners become receptive to his music."

Rajan and Sajan Misra, Théâtre de la Ville, Paris, February 17

(January 30)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani



Running order . . . Dame Paula is looking for new recruits to a contemplative life PHOTOGRAPH: GED MURRAY

Seeking sisters with a habit of silence

Martin Wroe

THE NEIGHBOURS do not complain. The people in the house next door are very quiet; in fact, they're silent. In the heart of Chester, at 10 Curzon Park South, stands a Benedictine abbey. The accountants and stockbrokers in the neighbourhood probably don't even realise the suburban sisters are there. Only one ventures out — once a week to do the shopping.

"People on the road think we're a bit strange, I think," says Dame Paula, the abbess, who is not a fundamentalist contemplative and has agreed to talk. "We're enclosed, so we can't go and see them to explain."

There is another reason the abbess doesn't mind talking: Dame Paula has only nine sisters, not really enough to secure even a suburban abbey's future.

It's not as if she needs nuns who can nurse or teach or do social work, nuns whose qualifications she could examine, whose references she could take up. On the surface, Dame Paula's nuns are entirely unproductive. Only two qualifications are necessary for this life of holy contemplation — the ability to be silent and to pray.

The nuns brought their abbey to suburbia seven years ago, after falling numbers and rising costs meant they could no longer afford their spacious premises overlooking the sea off the north Wales coast.

"It was going to cost a fortune to do it up, and with so much poverty in the world we decided we couldn't justify staying there," says Dame Paula. She has been a nun for three decades and abbess since 1989, just after they moved into number 10, formerly owned by a wine merchant's family. The abbey has its own chapel, dining room, bedrooms and even a retreat house.

Once a week, Sister Magdalen sets out for her regular shopping trip — with strict orders not to spend more than £40. Like everything else in a community of contemplatives, at lunch the whole world has gone quiet, but for the scraping of forks on plates, the blowing of cold noses under wimples and the distant rumble of sales executives driving past.

With a few exceptions such as the singing of offices, life is conducted in silence. By modern terms it is also unproductive.

"The point of our life? Well, what is the point of anyone's life?" asks Dame Paula. "We feel drawn to seek God. It's too ridiculous to explain what we mean by it, but it's about seeking truth, reality, meaning."

Sister Anne, who has been in the community since 1937, remembers how stupid her parents felt she was being, abandoning her training as a confectioner. "Most of our parents have thought that what we have done is a complete waste of our lives," she says.

At its peak there were 50 Benedictine nuns in the abbey in north Wales. Now there are only 159 in Britain — 50 fewer than five years ago, which is why Dame Paula is talking more than usual. "I would be grateful for a few more novices," she says. "This is too good a community to lose." — *The Observer*

Letter from North Korea Natalie Bennett

Uniform behaviour

IT SNOWED this morning in Pyongyang, and the women who sweep the already pristine streets were out even earlier than usual, and for once with something more than a faint speck of dust to shift with their twig brooms. Peering down from my 23rd floor window, the conformity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea became even more obvious than usual.

It is seen not in dress — the men may tend to wear dark suits, but the women and children offer splashes of colour in these grey northern climes — but in behaviour. Even here in the heart of the capital the average rate of traffic flow would not be more than one or two vehicles a minute, but everyone, absolutely everyone, disappears into the grim, dark underpasses at each corner. The tracks in the snow clearly show that no one diverges even slightly from the approved path, although you could cross the street blindfolded in perfect safety.

Walking the streets as a foreigner of European appearance I find a similar uniformity in the reaction to my presence. A path clears before me as I walk; the street cleaners, broom pauses, the trolley bus queue contracts to make space, the department store window shoppers shrink away from me. It as though I am an invisible force. Not one person catches my eye or acknowledges my presence by so much as a glance.

This morning I smiled at a young girl cradled by an obviously proud grandma, but she refused to acknowledge my overture. I nodded my thanks to the street sweeper, but she would not look up. In a total of three hours on the street, having escaped my guide, I succeeded in achieving only one response, from a group of around 40 ten-year-olds who appeared to have been temporarily abandoned by their teachers. They giggled hysterically at my greeting, and a few waved furtively as I walked away.

I had expected some curiosity and interest from the locals — after all in midwinter I am one of probably less than 20 European foreigners in a city of 2 million people, but instead the overwhelming feeling was of fear and hostility. That may have been because I could have been a hated American enemy or any enemy, since the collapse of the Soviet Union has taken away the last of the country's European friends. Another explanation is offered by sources that suggest any unauthorised contact with a foreigner could land a local in a "re-education camp".

The Korean war armistice may have been signed more than 40 years ago, but its battles, and the continuing cold war, are the defining story of the nation's life. At the Film Production Studios they were shooting a scene for a new movie about the war. A young and pretty revolutionary soldier stood guard at an intersection, a bus of jolly singing soldiers drove by, then an American bomber flew over. The street was filled with panicking women, children and old men. The guard pulled out her machine gun and, firing from the hip, engaged the enemy. Somehow I am sure one shot was enough to bring the evil plane down.

FROM THE three-year-olds I saw singing songs in praise of Kim Il Jong at the showcase nursery in Pyongyang, to their grandparents who survived the war, this society has known only one version of history, life and meaning. Even folk memories of great-grandparents — there must be a few who have survived — could only tell of a worse time, of more than 50 years of Japanese colonisation and oppression.

There is no alternative story to explain the past or the present. From the numerous monuments in Pyongyang, all accompanied by metre after metre of bronze statues of sturdy peasants and valiant soldiers, to the television with rapturous crowds again and again and again greeting Kim Jong Il or praising the virtues of his late father Kim Il Sung, it must be difficult to imagine any kind of alternative reality.

My presence in North Korea — together with the handful of UN experts and private business people all ensconced in an uncomfortable little community at the Koryo Hotel — indicates that the country is being forced to open ever so slightly to the rest of the world. Whether the society, and its political structures, will be able to cope with this contact, and gradually adapt to it, is one of the central questions of world politics today.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHAT IS it that makes a song catchy?

THE ANSWER, my friend, is blowing in the wind. — *Shehu Dikko, Lagos Nigeria*

RONALD J GRETZ in Music, Language And Fundamentals, says a good melody is "the right combination of rhythm, meter and pitch". What more needs to be said? — *Robin Bajer, Vancouver, Canada*

WHAT phenomena might one observe if the Earth were to slow down, come to a dead halt and then reverse the direction of spin on its axis?

PIGS would fly. — *Simon Montagu, Jerusalem, Israel*

THE CIRCULATION of the Earth's atmosphere and the weather systems that form in it are strongly influenced by the Earth's rotation. This constrains the major wind systems, such as the trade winds and the mid-latitude westerlies, to blow largely along latitude circles. As the Earth slowed down, these winds would become more sluggish and would adopt a more north-south orientation. The atmosphere would become much less efficient at transporting heat from the equator to the poles, so the climates of the tropics and the polar regions would become much more extreme.

I suspect that the resulting climatic chaos would put an end to all human life but, should anyone survive to witness the second half of the experiment, they would see the old atmospheric circulation patterns re-establish themselves with one crucial difference — the directions of the major wind systems would be reversed, with the trade winds blowing from the west and easterlies prevailing over Britain and Europe.

Similar changes would take place in the flow of the ocean currents and in motions within the Earth's liquid core. The latter are responsible for generating the Earth's magnetic field — as this changed there could be dramatic changes in the amount of cosmic radiation reaching the Earth's surface.

We can get some idea of the changes that might occur on a slowly-rotating Earth by studying the atmosphere of Venus, which takes 243 days to rotate about its axis. Interestingly, the Earth's rotation has slowed down significantly over geological time. The consequences of this for the evolution of life on Earth are speculated on by John Barrow in his book The Artful Universe (Oxford, 1995). — *Dr John King, Cambridge*

WHIPLASH. — *Brendan Quinn, Manchester*

Any answers?

AT WHAT event did Queen Victoria say: "We are not amused?" — *Rosalind Rusbridge, Bristol*

AT A preliminary hearing of the O J Simpson trial a sealed envelope was handed to the judge. What happened to it and what did it contain? — *B Stables, Rowlands Gill, Tyne and Wear*

CAN anyone explain why what appear to be fleurs-de-lis form part of the Bosnian flag? — *Mick Connon, Illinois, USA*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Notes & Queries Volume 6 is available from Fourth Estate, price £6.99

A Country Diary

Stewart MacGibbon

WAITAKERE, New Zealand: It is the middle of summer and the nikau palms are in the process of flowering and fruiting, a spectacular progression which attracts the local wood pigeons. The bract which holds the nikau leaf to the bulbous swelling at the top of the stem peels back from the cluster of leaves and is eventually dragged off the plant completely by the weight of the frond to reveal a substantial waxy-looking, flower-bearing structure, studded with a multitude of feathery, pale-pink flowers.

It doesn't take long for the flowers to attract a number of bees which can then be seen busily working amongst them for the next few days. The pollination and fertilisation process is fairly rapid: within two weeks the flowers have been replaced by the deep-green nubbins of the developing fruits. The warm, humid days rapidly ripen the fruits to a fiery orange-red.

The local wood pigeon (*kereru* in Maori) is slightly larger than its European counterpart, with a plump snow-white breast, an iridescent green back and wings and red legs and beak. These handsome birds can be heard in flight, producing a swooshing whistle as the air rushes past their flight feathers, silencing as they pull into a stall and then swoop back down to the trees. Alighting on the fruit-laden nikau palms they cling acrobatically at a series of precarious angles, the better to gorge themselves, pausing every few seconds to resume an upright posture and review the scene. A feeding session may last for 10 minutes or more before there is a soft explosion of sound as the pigeon bursts back into the air and is rapidly lost in the richly contoured canopy of the bush.

Brains and bravery of a boy wonder

At five Alexander Faludy was devouring Tolkien. Now, aged 12, he is taking an arts degree. And all this from a boy with severe dyslexia. Peter Kingston reports

A FEW weeks after his birth, the tiny infant who has now — aged 12 — become Britain's youngest arts degree student gave his parents a glimpse of his remarkable intelligence. Long before the books say that babies are supposed to, Alexander was laughing and smiling.

By his sixth birthday, Andrew and Tanya Faludy had no doubt they had an exceptional child. Alexander blew out the candles on his cake and rose to his feet. "Ladies and gentlemen," he began. "We are gathered together today, in this very house, by the grace of God, in prosperity, to celebrate my sixth birthday." Until a year ago, his parents' major problem was to convince schools of their son's remarkable gift, because Alexander's mental powers came at a price. He is severely dyslexic and has very poor physical co-ordination.

For him, conventional infant and primary schooling became increasingly traumatic. As he got older his difficulties with reading and writing and his ineptitude at games attracted savage bullying.

The book he has written with his mother, published in Britain last week, recounts her determination to find a viable education for her son, and his pain and frustration.

The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from A Little Edge Of Darkness, subtitled A Boy's Triumph Over Dyslexia, is that teachers may well be aware of the condition, but many in mainstream schooling are not yet equipped or inclined to take it into account.

As a toddler, Alexander's awkwardness with toys and play equipment, which was to set him apart from other children at junior school, distressed his parents. Desperate to find something he might enjoy, Tanya one day bought some tapes of children's stories. That evening, Alexander listened to Thomas the Tank Engine and Tanya told of her "gripped amazement as Alexander started to recite — verbatim — for a whole hour the stories he had listened to earlier".

Soon Alexander was devouring Tolkien. "His response to The Hobbit when he was five was very moving and impressive," said Tanya. "Something quite exceptional was going on in his head." Indeed, his oral skill had already clinched Alexander a place at a sought-after pre-prep school near the family home in Portsmouth. But that was his last official academic success for five years until he passed GCSE English Literature at the age of nine. Within days of his starting at the school, hints were being dropped, said Tanya, that he might be better off elsewhere.



Pillars of strength: Alexander and his mother Tanya PHOTO: MARC HILL

Throughout pre-prep and the next stage, from 8 to 11, Alexander's clumsiness — his persistent inability to tie shoelaces, or hold a cup and saucer — and his agonising lack of progress with reading and writing condemned him to misery.

"Class discussions weren't evaluated as part of work," Alexander said. "The only way I was evaluated was for my writing, but it used to take me a whole lesson just to read what I was meant to be copying down off the board."

At seven Alexander joined Mensa and his dyslexia was officially diagnosed. Through Fareham College, where Tanya teaches, he was entered for GCSE English literature and at nine achieved the youngest pass. That same year at school, he was ranked 20th out of 22 in class for English. Two years later he passed the A level, having been granted dispensation to tape-record his answers.

Now Alexander seems to have found a school flexible enough to allow his unique talent to thrive. Milton Abbey school, Dorset, specialises in teaching boys with learning difficulties.

He is now in the second year of an Open University arts foundation course. His own room is set up with television, video, radio and cassette player. The OU textbooks he gets on tape from the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

"It's a new and good experience for all of us," said his housemaster, Andrew Day. "But it's quite daunting to have a 12-year-old who wanders into your study and asks you what you think about Faustus." Over the next four years, the school hopes that its methods of rebuilding the confidence of so many dyslexic boys will help Alexander. The plan is that he will have graduated by the time he leaves and then go on to university at the usual age to do a second degree.

Tough as his experience has been, Alexander has been lucky to have parents committed and resourceful enough to see him through to an opportunity which is beyond many dyslexic children. How many, one wonders, are defeated by an education system that is not yet geared up for them.

A Little Edge Of Darkness — A Boy's Triumph Over Dyslexia, by Tanya and Alexander Faludy, is published by Jessica Kingsley, tel: (+44)171-833 2307, price £9.95



Health Unlimited

Health Unlimited (Registered Charity no 290535) works in less developed countries to improve the health of communities affected by conflict.

BRAZIL: COUNTRY MANAGER

To develop new initiative and manage a series of PHC projects based in remote areas of the Amazon rainforest working with a number of indigenous groups, rubber tappers, landless peasants and forest smallholders. The person will be responsible for planning and management of health project activities with a number of individual project managers and their staff; supervision and provision of personnel management; accounting (project finances), administrative and logistical support for project activities, liaising and coordinating with different government ministries, international funders and local organisations. S/he will be based in Sao Paulo but must be prepared to travel throughout the Amazon region.

Applicants must have fluent Portuguese, management skills, PHC and overseas development experience and good interpersonal/diplomatic skills.

SOMALILAND: PROJECT MANAGER

To continue the implementation of a PHC training and capacity building project in an unstable area. The person will be responsible for overall management including: liaison and negotiation with local elders, government health workers and village health committees to ensure an open and transparent mode of operation. Supervision of project activities, staff, logistics, narrative and financial reporting, communications and liaison with donors, other NGOs, UN agencies and government will also be required.

Applicants must have good written and spoken English, management skills, experience in PHC and in a less developed country, good interpersonal/diplomatic skills. Knowledge Somali language and culture and experience in conflict areas is desirable.

LAOS: TEAM LEADER

To continue the implementation of a PHC training project in Attapeu province. The person will be responsible for: project planning and management; monitoring and reporting to the regional office; administration, finance (project accounts) and logistics of the project; liaising with government authorities and other NGOs; project activities including training local health staff in planning and management of health services, monitoring and evaluating PHC methods.

Applicants must have good written and spoken English, management skills, experience in PHC and in a less developed country, excellent communication and reporting skills.

Terms and conditions: minimum 12 months contract, flights, insurance and living expenses are provided, the post is unaccompanied, salary to be confirmed. Closing date: 26/2/96.

Contact by telephone or fax: Lucy Medd, Tel: 0171 928 8105, Fax: 0171 928 7736.

Angola needs you !

The 30 year long war in Angola is almost over. Development Aid from People to People (DAPP) is looking for volunteers to participate in a 14 months international programme to support the peace process in Angola. No special qualifications are needed.

6 months training at The Travelling High School, Lillehammer, Norway.

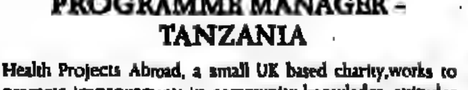
6 months of solidarity work in Angola. You select a position within one of the following areas:

- Teaching street children in "children's town"
- Improve sanitation conditions in the villages, by building latrines and water cleaning systems.
- Organize vaccination campaigns and start up a vocational school for women.

2 months of project evaluation in Norway, including information work in Europe.

You pay the school fees yourself. Start: 1/6 or 15/11.

Fax: 0045 43 99 50 82, DAPP GW, Box 236, 2630 Tastrup, Denmark.



HEALTH PROJECTS ABROAD PROGRAMME MANAGER - TANZANIA

HEALTH PROJECTS ABROAD

Health Projects Abroad, a small UK based charity, works to promote improvements in community knowledge, attitudes and practice in relation to health and development.

We are now looking for an experienced manager to lead the next phase of our programme in Tanzania's Tabora Region. You must have experience of development work, preferably gained working in Sub-Saharan Africa, and a commitment to community participation. In addition you must have excellent communications skills, be fluent in written and spoken English and be willing and able to learn KiSwahili. Closing date for applications 29th February. Interviews in London/Dar Es Salaam. Start date end April/early May. For further details please call on +44 (0)1629 640051 or fax +44 (0)1629 640054.

To place your advertisement

Tel +44 (0) 161 834 8686 Fax +44 (0) 161 839 4436

The Guardian Weekly, 164 Deansgate, Manchester M60 2RR England

Cranfield UNIVERSITY
School of Management

Managing Enterprise Development

A relevant and practical training course specifically designed to improve the managerial effectiveness and understanding of NGO staff who run programmes designed to promote small business and who work closely with micro enterprise and entrepreneurs.

Finance for Enterprise

NGOs are increasingly involved in running credit and loans schemes. This programme will equip staff with the skills to run sustainable and cost effective credit schemes and will examine alternative way of financing small scale enterprise.

Further information from Jenny Wheeley, International Development Centre, Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield, Bedford, England MK43 0AL. Tel: +44 (0) 1234 751122. Fax: +44 (0) 1234 754420. Email j.wheeler@cranfield.ac.uk

Cranfield University is an exempt charity offering a centre of excellence for research and education

Christian Aid

we believe in life before death

Christian Aid is the development agency of 40 churches working to strengthen the poor in 60 countries worldwide. We work with the poor through their own local organisations and through advocacy in Europe.

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Herat, Afghanistan £18,655 per annum

We need a self motivating individual or job sharing couple, experienced in managing people and resources and a minimum of 2 years relevant experience in the south (preferably in conflict area).

You will be able to support Afghan NGOs both in identifying programmes for funding and in their training and organisational development. Your role will include recruiting and managing a small team of local staff. People with an understanding of social and political aspects of Islam are particularly welcome to apply.

One year contract, with possibility of extension.

Closing date: 4 March Interview date: 13 or 15 March

For further details and an application form, write to Personnel Department, Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT or fax on 0171-620 0719.

TERRE DES HOMMES

An international children's foundation registered in Switzerland is seeking a number of

DELEGATES

to manage programmes in several locations overseas.

Terre des hommes supports programmes providing a range of services to poor and children in difficult circumstances around the world. A number of posts for country representatives will become vacant during the first half of 1996, notably in Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Romania), in Afghanistan and South Asia and in West Asia (Lebanon).

The Terre des hommes Delegate represents the organisation and heads the senior management team providing support and leadership to the various country programmes. It is Terre des hommes' policy to "localise" these programmes through the development of local NGOs.

Broad based management experience gained overseas is required along with a good knowledge of child care issues. Good French and a knowledge of other languages useful.

Terms and conditions of service and salary levels will depend on personal circumstances. Applications and full C.V. with passport size photo to:

Suzanne von Allmen, Personnel Department, Case postale 912, CH 1000 Lausanne 9, Switzerland.

FREELANCE JOURNALISM AND CREATIVE WRITING COURSES BY DISTANCE LEARNING

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

[illegible] 22 Upbrook Mews, Bayswater, London W2 [illegible]
Tel: +44(0)171 706 3790 Fax: +44(0)171 706 3780
Email: info@[illegible]

WATER MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

The Banana Export Company (BECO) of Jamaica is a private limited company composed of Jamaican banana growers that produce for the European Union market. As the sole exporter of bananas from Jamaica to the EU, BECO has been designated "The Recipient" of an EC Grant aimed at improving the competitiveness of the banana industry in Jamaica. The grant is made available under the EU's Special System of Assistance to Traditional African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Suppliers of Bananas (Regulation 2686/94).

BECO seeks to recruit a Water Management Specialist to manage implementation of a water management systems project designed to increase banana growers' production as well as improve their quality and productivity in terms of exportable yields.

The successful candidate will be responsible for the following:-

1. A programme of theoretical and practical training for Project Technicians in water management;
2. Providing farmers with assistance in the design of Water Management Systems (WMS);
3. Assessing tenders for the installation of WMS;
4. Assisting in the preparation of loan applications;
5. Monitoring the installation of the WMS and approving payment for completed work;
6. Collecting and analysing performance data on the WMS;
7. Providing on-going training to farmers before, during and after installation of the WMS.

The candidate will also be required to prepare and submit quarterly reports to the Project Manager.

The project will run for a duration of two (2) years.

QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE

1. Applicants should meet the following requirements:-
   Be the Holder of a Masters Degree in Water Management, or a closely related subject with a minimum of five (5) years experience in designing installation and operation of water management systems (preferably in bananas). However, candidates with a BSc in the desired discipline, with relevant practical experience in Water Management, may be considered.
   Possess a high level of communication skills suitable for providing technical advice and training at various levels.
   Be the holder of a valid drivers licence which permits them to drive heavy goods vehicle.

PARTICIPATION AND ORIGIN

Applicants must be nationals of member states of the European Union or the ACP States that are signatories to the Lome IV Convention.

Applicants should submit a detailed C.V. to:-

The Managing Director Banana Export Company Ltd.
c/o Jamco LTD, 1 Prince Consort Road,
London SW7 2BZ England
Fax: 44 171 823-9870
CLOSING DATE February 29, 1996.

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY
WATER SCIENTIST/ENGINEER

Environmental Health Division - Robens Institute

We are seeking an experienced water scientist/engineer to join the Environment Division to work on a range of projects both overseas and the UK. This post will be for one year in the first instance, with the potential for this to be extended.

Applicants should have a first degree in an appropriate scientific or engineering subject and preferably a post-graduate qualification in a water related field. A minimum of 4 years post-qualifying experience is expected, of which at least 1-2 years should have been in a developing country. The successful candidate is expected to be familiar with preparing and submitting proposals to donor agencies.

Salary will be consummate with experience and qualification on the RAIA scale and is expected to be in the range of £16,628 to £19,[illegible] per annum. Previous applicants will automatically be reconsidered.

For an informal discussion please contact either Guy Howard or Dr Steven Pedley on +44 (0) 1483 259209. Applications in the form of a CV and covering letter (2 copies) including names and addresses of two referees should be sent to the Personnel Office (sab), University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5XH by 26 February 1996 quoting reference 435.

The University is committed to an Equal Opportunities Policy.

Promoting excellence in education and research.

MINES ADVISORY GROUP OVERSEAS VACANCY

The Mines Advisory Group is an international charity (UK registered) committed to addressing the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance among the most vulnerable communities worldwide. MAG operates in North Iraq, Angola, Cambodia, Laos, Zambia and Zaire implementing humanitarian mine clearance and community mine awareness education programmes. MAG is totally committed to a global ban on landmines and is active in the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Logistician - Zaire: Required March 1996. Three months posting with possible extension MAG is preparing a mine awareness programme for Angolian refugees in Zaire, who may repatriate to mined areas in Angola later this year. The logistician will assist in the setting up of this operation. S/he will be required to work with minimal support in often difficult and complex circumstances. Previous experience gained in Africa, with an NGO, is preferred. Reasonable fluency in French is essential. Technical knowledge of landmines and clearance is not required.

MAG provides a competitive salary, flights and insurance package. For further information please send a SAE to: Richard Moyes, Mines Advisory Group, 54A Main Street, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 9LU. Tel: (+44) 1900 828580, fax (+44) 1900 827088.

Closing date: 28 February 1996.

Regional Co-ordinator - Development in Rwanda

"Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund
Charity No. 801160

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, an international conservation organisation, seeks a project leader to develop and implement a programme of small-scale development and conservation education projects to help engender a 'conservation culture' in the communities that adjoin the habitat of the endangered mountain gorillas in Rwanda.

The contract position is for two years. Business administration and/or economics qualifications, a good grasp of environmental issues, at least 5 years experience in francophone Africa, plus a practical familiarity with the region is required.

Must have the ability to communicate fully in French and English. Required to be a self-starter, to have strong entrepreneurial, proposal writing and communications skills, administration, financial and cash-flow experience.

Salary commensurate with experience.

To apply, submit cover letter and CV by 23 February 1996 to
The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, 110 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 8JA;
Fax: +44 (0) 171 722 0928.

FIFTY CARE YEARS

PROJECT MANAGER,

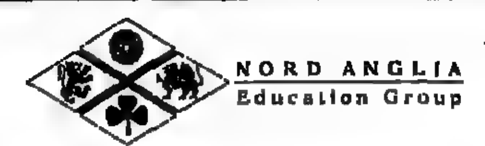
FINANCIAL SERVICES PROJECT COMPONENT

Angoche town, Nampula Province, Mozambique

Responsible for the effective implementation of a sub-component of the Development of Artisanal Fisheries project. The objective of the project will be to increase income and economic productivity of mainly fishing households by establishing and/or strengthening the capacity of MBEU, a local NGO, and community based organizations to provide savings and credit services for mainly fishing-related activities.

The requirements include a bachelors degree in business administration, or related field; three years of practical experience in urban or rural financial services programming; fluency in English; functional level in both oral and written Portuguese or Spanish.

The position is for two years and the start date is immediate. Please send resume and cover letter to CARE, HR Department, 151 Ellis Street, Atlanta, GA 30303-2439, or fax 404-577-9418.



NORD ANGLIA Education Group

Worldwide Education

Nord Anglia Education Group is the largest provider of private education in Britain with:

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE ACADEMIES - year-round English Language courses to suit all needs in Britain, New Zealand and USA.

NORD ANGLIA INTERNATIONAL - vacation courses for groups and individuals throughout Britain, Ireland and USA. Year-round short stay educational tours.

ACCESS TO BRITISH EDUCATION AND TRAINING - at the Group's day and boarding schools in Britain, including preparation for University.

For further details write to:
Ewen Mackenzie-Bowie, REF. GW
Nord Anglia Education PLC
10 Eden Place, CHEADLE, SK8 1AT, UK
Fax: +44 (0)161-491 4409 E-mail: 100532.40@compuserve.com

CLASSIFIED

CAR HIRE

PAMBER CAR HIRE U.K. PHONE: +44 (0) 1734 442412
62 READING ROAD, WOODLEY, READING, RG5 3DB. FAX: +44 (0) 1734 696295
[illegible]
WE MEET YOUR FLIGHT AND YOU CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY WITHOUT DELAYS.

A	ROVER METRO / FORD FIESTA	£ 90	F	FORD SIERRA 1.6 ESTATE / PEUGEOT 405 ESTATE	£125
B	FORD ESCORT 1.4 / ROVER 214	£105	G	FORD MONDEO 1.8/2.0 LX / PEUGEOT 405 1.9 GR	£150
C	FORD ESCORT 1.3L ESTATE (OR SIMILAR)	£120	H	ROVER 620 SLI	£170
D	ROVER 416 & 216	£120	J	VOLVO ESTATE / FORD GRANADA ESTATE	£265
E	FORD MONDEO 1.6 / PEUGEOT 405	£130	K	ROVER 820 SLI	£210
S	ROVER 220 COUPE	£180			

WEEKLY RATE INCLUDES FULLY COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE AND UNLIMITED MILEAGE. CDW OPTIONAL. [illegible] DELIVERY TO LONDON AIRPORTS [illegible] OVER ONE WEEK. FULL RAC COVER. ALL RATES PLUS VAT. CREDIT CARD ACCEPTED.

Thrifty

PRICES FROM £99 PER WEEK (INCLUDES CDW & VAT)

■ LOW, LOW PRICES ■ GREAT SERVICE FROM A WORLDWIDE COMPANY ■ FULLY INCLUSIVE RATES ■ WIDE RANGE OF VEHICLES ■ OVER 60 LOCATIONS NATIONWIDE ■ CALL, WRITE OR FAX TO OUR CENTRAL RESERVATIONS

TELEPHONE 01494 442 110 FACSIMILE 01494 474 732

THRIFTY CAR RENTAL THE OLD COURTHOUSE HUGHENDEN ROAD HIGH WYCOMBE BUCKS. HP13 5DT

ACCESS CAR HIRE U.K. Tel: +44 (0) 1734 [illegible]
Horncastle Garage Ltd Fax: +44 (0) 1734 [illegible]
[illegible] Road, Reading, Berkshire RG2 [illegible]

SPECIAL OFFERS!!!

AVAILABLE ON ALL FIESTA AND ESCORT MODELS AND MONDEO 1.8 LX

PLEASE WRITE PHONE OR FAX FOR DETAILS.

EXAMPLE

ESCORT 1.4 FOR 2 WEEKS £247.00

FULL INCLUSIVE OF COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE, CDW, VAT, DEL/COLL TO HEATHROW, GATWICK OR LONDON

NEW CARS: OLD PRICES HEATHROW/GATWICK

- Personal meet & greet service
- Discounts for expats & diplomats
- Unlimited mileage
- Full 24 hr AA & RAC cover
- Visa/Access accepted

County

Contact us for fully inclusive rate
58 Meadow, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3HT UK
Tel +44 1483 860046
Fax +44 1483 860187

POPESWOOD SELF DRIVE

- Economy/Self Drive at Heathrow and Gatwick
- 24 Month Old Vehicles, Full insurance, AA Cover, Free Delivery
  OR
- New Vehicles at Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Stansted, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Bristol
- One-Way Rentals
- All Models Available

LONDON ROAD, BRACKNELL, RG12 2AA
Tel: +44 1344 424120
Fax: +44 1344 424021

CAR RENTAL

Our rates are inclusive of VAT, CDW, Unlimited Mileage and full AA membership and meet and greet service at Airport terminals

	WEEKLY	DAILY 7+
PANDA/CINQUENCENTO	84.00	12.00
FIESTA/CORSA	98.00	14.00
MICRA/UNO	113.00	16.00
ESCORT/ASTRA	140.00	20.00
MONDEO/PRIMERA	154.00	22.00
7 SEATERS	315.00	45.00
RANGE ROVERS	525.00	75.00

HEATHROW-AUTOHIRE-GATWICK
THE VILLAGE GARAGE, HIGH STREET, DORMANSLAND, SURREY, RH7 6PY
TELEPHONE: 11 44 1342 833338
FAX: 00 11 1342 832211

10% Special Discount Offer

Use this advertisement to obtain a 10% REDUCTION ON ALL OUR BROCHURE RATES*. All cars under 4 months old, excellent service, nationwide network.

WOODS CAR RENTAL
Central Reservations (GW)
Wolvers Home Farm, Ironsbottom, Sidlow, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8QG
Tel: +44 1293 658888
Fax: +44 1293 658890
Also in Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Gatwick, Glasgow, Heathrow, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Southampton and Stansted
*This discount is not available on special or promotional rates

AEROLINK Rent-A-Car

- Professional Management
- Late Model Vehicles
- Free In-Terminal Delivery Service to Gatwick & Heathrow (Heathrow 5 days min)
- Out of Hours Service at no Extra Cost

All this and more plus Unbeatable Rates eg

Make/Model	Daily	Weekly
Ford Fiesta 1.1L	£20.00	£133.00
Ford Escort 1.3/1.4 LX	£23.00	£159.95
Ford Mondeo 1.6/1.8 LX	£27.00	£178.65
Ford Sierra Estate 1.8 LX	£27.00	£182.95

Our rates are ABSOLUTELY FULLY INCLUSIVE of VAT, Full Insurance, CDW, Unlimited Mileage and AA Breakdown Cover. For Truly Personal Service & Immediate Quotation, Call or Write:

7 Crompton Way, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 2QR (GATWICK)
+44 1293-403-123
or Fax +44 1293-403-007

[illegible] Road, Heathrow, Middlesex TW6 2AA

Flying into Heathrow?

Your passport to the open road

REGENT CAR RENTAL

Telephone: +44 181 759 4180
Facsimile: +44 181 759 4190

NEVER HIRE A CAR UNTIL YOU HAVE CHECKED KENDALL'S PRICES

200 Fine Cars, Vans, Estates, 7, 12 & 15-Seaters for Hire. Airport Collection.

KENDALL CARS
34 Aldershot Rd., Guildford GU2 6AF.
Tel: +44 1483 574434
Fax: +44 1483 34781

LONDON HOTELS & APARTMENTS



MODERN SERVICE APARTMENTS 202 LONDON

Self-contained, fully serviced apartments in Kensington – close to park, shops, buses and subways, Colour TV, telephone, equipped kitchen, central heating. Modern comfort at reasonable rates. Car Park. Brochure by return mail Quote RA

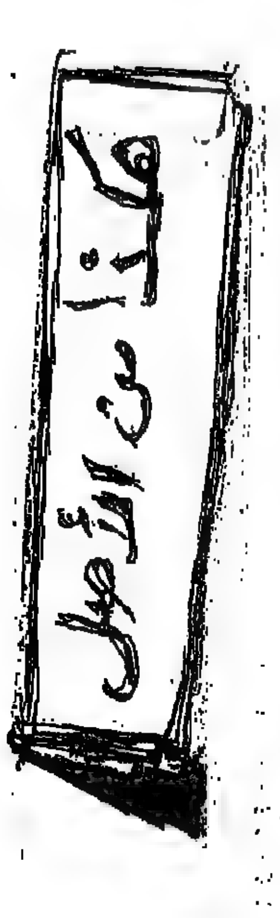
Special Winter Rates November - April from £47 pn.

CHALFONT (KENSINGTON) LTD
198 202 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET, LONDON W8 4DP ENGLAND
Tel: (0) 171 229 9371 / 229 3065 Fax: (0) 171 727 7039
Telex: 262433 (ref /63564)

To place your advertisement

TEL +44 (0) 161 834 8686 or FAX +44 (0) 161 839 4436

The Guardian Weekly, 164 Deansgate Manchester M60 2RR England





Gotta dance, rain or shine

Gene Kelly

WHEN Gene Kelly sang Gotta Dance, Gotta Dance in the Broadway Ballet from Singin' In The Rain (1952), he was uttering his personal credo. Kelly, who has died aged 83, danced in his childhood, became a dance instructor, danced on Broadway and danced in 19 Hollywood musicals between 1942 and 1957, establishing himself, with Fred Astaire, as the greatest male dancer in motion picture history.

"If I'm the Marlon Brando of dancing, Fred Astaire's Cary Grant," he once remarked. Comparisons may be odious, but they are often instructive. Astaire's evening wear contrasted with Kelly's T-shirt and jeans and the most celebrated sailor suit in cinema history besides Donald Duck's. Astaire was ethereal, Kelly corporeal; Astaire strutted, Kelly swaggered.

Unlike Astaire, Kelly lacked the selflessness to blend with a female dancing partner, so that his best duets were with other men where a sense of rivalry rather than romance suited his personality better: with the Nicholas Brothers in the vigorous Be A Clown number from The Pirate (1948); with Frank Sinatra and Jules Munshin in the exuberant New York, New York from On The Town (1949); with Donald O'Connor in the terrific, tongue-twisting tapper Moses Supposes routine from Singin' In The Rain, and the street dance with Michael Kidd and Dan Dailey with garbage-can lids attached to their feet in It's Always Fair Weather.

It is, of course, Kelly's solos that really ignite the screen, with his virile, earthy and inventive dancing combining gymnastics, tap and ballet. Kelly always believed that dancing and sports were inextricably linked.

Among examples of his athletic prowess were his leaps from rooftop to balcony in Anchors Aweigh and The Pirate, his use of metal rings, step-ladders and planks of wood in Living In A Big Way (1947), and his rollerskating through the streets of New York in It's Always Fair Weather, a number which took 12 days to rehearse and four days to shoot.

The apotheosis of Gene Kelly — *danseur extraordinaire* — was the liberating title number from Singin' In The Rain. In love, Kelly walks out into the "California dew" under an umbrella. He puts his hand out to feel the rain, shrugs his shoulders and folds his umbrella. As "the sun's in his heart" he has no need for shelter. He climbs on to a lamp-post, his arms outstretched "laughing at clouds in the sky". Then he stands under a drainpipe, childishly splashes in the gutter, jumps into puddles and swings round and round holding his umbrella at arm's length as the camera lifts in a breathtaking crane shot. As an example of *joie de vivre*, it has seldom been equalled.

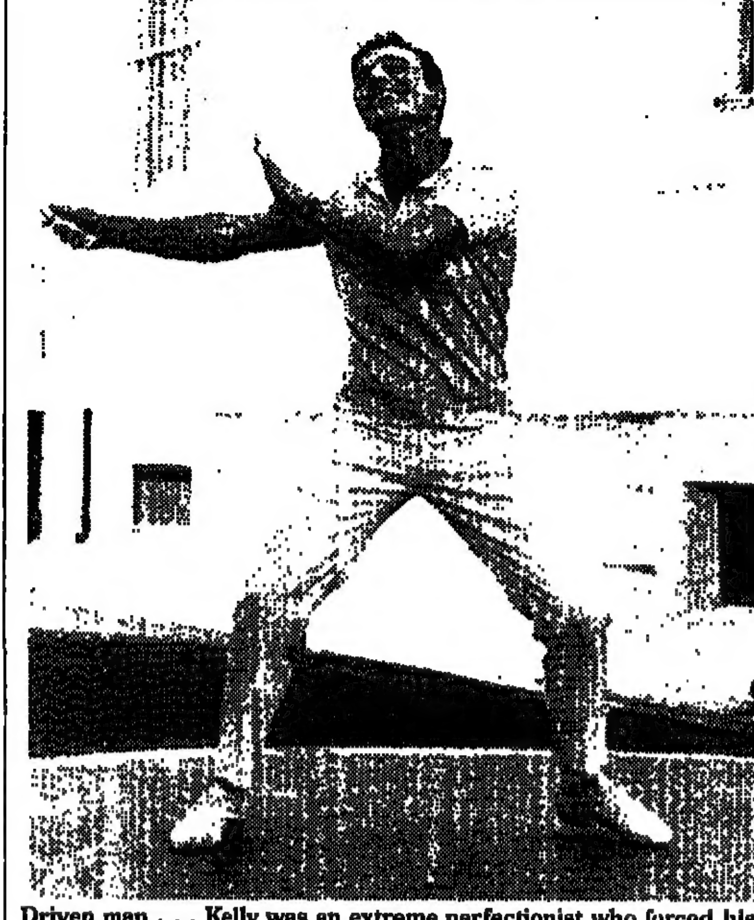
Eugene Curren Kelly was born at the Sacred Heart Parish in Pittsburgh of second generation Irish parents. Like his two brothers and two sisters, he was encouraged to do sports and take dancing lessons. But it was only when he got to Penn State college in 1929, that he began to enjoy dancing in public.

His first great influence was a black dancer called Dancing Dotson, from whom he admitted stealing several steps. After graduating with an economics degree, the 20-year-old opened Gene Kelly's Studio of the Dance.

In 1938, leaving his family to run the school, Kelly arrived in New York, where he soon moved from chorus boy to choreographer and leading man. He choreographed shows at Billy Rose's exclusive Diamond Horseshoe club, and the successful Broadway musical Best Foot Forward, as well as appearing as Harry the Hoofer in William Saroyan's sentimental comedy The Time Of Your Life.

BUT HIS biggest break came as the "heel hero" of Rogers and Hart's Pal Joey in 1940, a role that defined his cocksure personality. It got him invited to Hollywood where MGM producer Arthur Freed, the Diaghilev of the movie musical, cast Kelly as the egotistical dancer in For Me And My Gal (1942) opposite Judy Garland. Garland and Kelly were well teamed in a further two films. As Pauline Kael observed, "She joined her odd and undervalued cake-walker's prance to his large-spirited hoofing, and he joined his odd, light, high voice to her sweet, deep one." After the success of For Me And My Gal, Kelly became a major MGM star, a position he enjoyed for 15 years.

Gene and his 19-year-old actress wife, Betsy Blair, became part of Hollywood society and kept open house on Saturday nights where some of the greatest talents in Hollywood gathered. He and Betsy gained reputations as free-thinking liberals, so it was no surprise, a few years later, when they were approached by the House UnAmerican Activities. Gene was exonerated, but Betsy was put on an implicit black list for four years.



Driven man . . . Kelly was an extreme perfectionist who forced his partners through weeks of painful choreography

Of the seven movies he directed solo, only two were musicals. Invitation To The Dance (1956), a partially successful attempt to make an all-dancing film, contained three ballets, the last featuring Kelly and cartoon characters. There were glimpses of the old-time musical magic in Hello Dolly! (1969), but it suffered from overkill and the miscasting of Barbra Streisand in the title role. His non-musicals had two left feet.

However, it was as co-director, with Stanley Donen, of the invigorating and trailblazing trilogy — On The Town, Singin' In The Rain and It's Always Fair Weather — that Gene Kelly made his greatest creative contribution.

In 1957, Betsy divorced Kelly after 17 years of marriage. In 1960, Kelly married Jeannie Coyne, once the wife of Stanley Donen. He had known her as a child at the school where he taught dancing, then on Broadway, and as a chorus girl in many an MGM musical. They had two children (he had a daughter by Betsy Blair) before Jeannie died of leukemia in 1973.

After a skiing accident in the early sixties damaged his knee, Kelly did little dancing, but often appeared in films as a reminder of the great days of the musical. Always much admired in France (he choreographed a ballet at the Paris Opera), he was paid homage by French director Jacques Demy who cast him in The Young Girls Of Rochefort (1967), a musical about three sailors on leave. Relatively young in appearance, he cropped up in two youth movies, Viva Knievell (1977) as a drunken bike mechanic, and Xanadu (1980) with Olivia Newton-John where, still smiling broadly, his appearance recalled the days when he was "laughin' at the clouds in the sky".

Like the Little Tramp walking towards the sunset, Gene Kelly, with arms outstretched, hanging from a lamp-post, folded umbrella in one hand, and beaming up into the pouring rain, is one of the most abiding images in film mythology.

Ronald Bergan

Gene Kelly, actor, dancer, director, choreographer; born August 3, 1912: died February 2, 1996

Dialectics at the opera

Ruth Berghaus

IN DECEMBER 1981 after the premiere of a new production of The Seraglio at the Frankfurt Opera House, and amid a storm of boos and catcalls from the audience, a stage hand told me: "Later we will be able to understand what this means. She is 10 years ahead of us." He was talking about Ruth Berghaus who had directed the Mozart opera.

Berghaus, who has died aged 68, remained up to her last production — the premiere of Rolf Liebermann's Freispruch fur Medea last year — ahead of her time. She never accepted the conventional way of opera making, and always took a fresh, often radical look at the well-established and the routine, which is why booing accompanied her career from her first staging of Richard Strauss's Elektra at the Berlin State Opera in 1967.

Ruth Berghaus was born in Dresden and it was there, after the war, and a brief internment, that she studied dance and choreography at Gret Palucca's school. In 1951 Palucca sent her pupils to see Bertolt Brecht's Mother Courage, an occasion which provided Berghaus's first encounter with the Berliner Ensemble. Berghaus was so impressed that she moved to Berlin to continue her training, first with Wolfgang Langhoff then at Brecht's theatre. There she met Paul Dessau, Brecht's composer, and they married in 1954. Palucca, Brecht and Dessau influenced the young choreographer and it is thanks to them that in Berghaus's work dance, music and theatre were brought together in a unique unity.

She successfully transferred Brecht's techniques to opera, a task Brecht had thought impossible. And it was from him she learned the *erzählerische* arrangement — his art of creating a story on stage.

She was often criticised for cold and emotionless productions. However, she countered this by explaining that emotion did not have to be shown but rather experienced by the audience through her direction. Coming from the Brechtian school, she purposely avoided any identification with the action on stage. Her approach was analytical never psychological. She wanted people to think about what they saw, understand connections and relate them to themselves.

The fall of the Berlin wall and the new political situation did not work to Berghaus's advantage. She always regarded herself as a faithful citizen of the German Democratic Republic despite the interference she suffered from the censor. She remained, despite all the personal criticism, a very vulnerable person who hoped for nothing more than that audiences should understand her work.

Klaus Bertisch

Ruth Berghaus, choreographer and director, born July 2, 1927; died January 25, 1996

Old master of bridge

Terence Reese

TERENCE REESE, who towered over the game of contract bridge for six decades, has died aged 82. He learned bridge from his mother when only six. Since his hands were too small to hold 13 cards, he had to arrange his cards behind a cushion. By the age of 14 he was competing in bridge tournaments.

Reese won a senior classics scholarship to Oxford and became captain of the university bridge team at the same time as Iain Macleod, the future Chancellor of the Exchequer, captained the Cambridge team.

In the 1930s, Reese and four other leading players of the day — Jack Marx, Macleod, Maurice Harrison-Gray and "Skid" Simon — gathered at a club in Acol Street, Hampstead. After several evenings of discussion they gave birth to the Acol bidding system, still used today by the great majority of British players.

The tall, balding Terence Reese became a dominant figure in the British tournament world. He formed a famous partnership with Boris Schapiro, winning the Gold Cup eight times and the Master Pairs seven times (both a record). Reese was a masterful card player but conservative in the auction; Schapiro was more flamboyant, choosing bids and plays which were likely to provoke the opponents into error.

They were the anchor pair in the British teams of the day, winning the European Championships of 1948, 1949, 1954 and 1963.

In 1955 came the supreme achievement, winning the world championship in New York. In 1961 Reese won the World ParChampionship (where the hands are pre-set by an expert panel), and in 1962 he added the World Pairs Olympiad. His supreme technique, and the consistency of his results, led many to rank him as the world's finest player.

Despite his achievements at the table, it is as a writer on the game that Reese achieved greatest fame. He was editor of the British Bridge World magazine from 1955-62, and became the world's most prolific bridge writer.

He was bridge correspondent for the Observer, the Evening News (later the Evening Standard), and the Lady. By his death, he had written some 83 books on bridge, with two more in the pipeline.

What was so remarkable about these books? Reese combined exceptional insight into the game with a mastery of the English language. His two classics, Reese On Play and The Expert Game, were years ahead of their time, explaining advanced concepts that many players find difficult to grasp today. His style was economical, with never a word wasted, and he exhibited a dry, sometimes acerbic, sense of humour.

David Bird

John Terence Reese, bridge master; born August 28, 1913; died January 29, 1996

Suburbia blooms in the Nevada desert

Las Vegas is the fastest growing city in the US. **Jonathan Freedland** visits it to find out why

HOWARD HUGHES is long dead but his influence lives on in Las Vegas. The ghost of the eccentric multi-millionaire is taking it easy these days, not in the countless casinos and hotels he built on the Strip but in a pleasant "planned community" called — after his grandmother — Summerlin.

It is one of dozens of estates of Mexican-style houses with adobe arches and crenellated terracotta roofs that are popping up all over Las Vegas.

Far away from the neon glitz, Summerlin was once waste land, bought by Hughes in his dying days. With characteristic foresight the old hermit sensed that Vegas would spread outward. It is now North America's fastest growing city.

The expansion is relentless: 7,000 new people arrive each month and 100 new jobs are created every day. Las Vegas issues twice as many residential building permits as its nearest rivals, Atlanta and Phoenix: $7 million worth a day.

It is growing so fast — the population has more than doubled since 1980 to more than 1.1 million — that alone among American cities it has had to change its telephone directory twice a year, just to keep up.

In the process it has been transformed from a place where Americans could go for a naughty weekend to a template for urban America: walled communities, cash-starved services, and a flight from the inner city.

Summerlin, whose ownership is still contested by the 300 would-be heirs to the vast Hughes estate, is a trim, purpose-built settlement in the desert composed of pseudo-villages with bucolic-sounding names: the Trails, the Crossing, the Pueblo. There is not a casino in sight.

Joined to it is Sun City, "retirement village", whose welcome sign warns visitors that they are "entering a golf-cart permissible community". It has a civic centre, shops, a theatre, even a church and a synagogue. The whole settlement has been built behind walls, and is patrolled by private security guards.

Bill Thompson of the University of Nevada calls the phenomenon, which is not confined to Las Vegas, "fortress domesticity".

Together, Summerlin and Sun City explain what is happening to Las Vegas. The prodigious growth of the hotel-casinos — the Strip has nine of the world's 10 largest hotels — has brought in ten of thousands of workers. They need homes and schools for their children, and the suburbs have had to swell to accommodate them.

Sun City has been a magnet for pensioners from the east coast, the "snowbirds" who previously turned Florida into a senior citizens' haven.

But the year-round sunshine is not the only lure. Ten thousand Californian over-65s moved to Las Vegas last year, drawn by Nevada's no-income-tax rule and ultra-cheap house prices.

Hotel-casinos create jobs that draw 7,000 people a month to Las Vegas PHOTOGRAPH: JACKY CHAPMAN

The influx of aged newcomers in particular has exerted a strain. Without state income taxes, revenue must be raised by so-called bond issues, approved by referendum. But elderly voters keep rejecting requests for money for schools — even for police.

"It's a real problem," says the mayor of Las Vegas, Jan Laverty Jones, re-elected with 72 per cent of the vote last year and something of a Democratic rising star.

"They have an attitude," she says of the Vegas senior population. "They feel they have paid enough and they don't want to pay any more."

Ms Jones is forced to turn to the casinos, which already pay half of Las Vegas's taxes. But she would rather not. She wishes that her city was more than a company town dependent on the gaming industry.

The end of the cold war was a blow: the closure of the nuclear testing site in Nevada deprived the area of physicists and skilled workers. "If we're going to cope with the growth, we need to diversify the economy," she says.

That means new businesses. Sega, the video-games group, has moved from California, but enticing others can be difficult. Citibank relocated its credit-card processing plant to Las Vegas, but not before it had created a fictitious postal address — the Lakes — lest customers fear their cheques are being gambled away.

On top of it all, Las Vegas is in the desert, with no water of its own. Recently it devised a plan to take enough water from Lake Mead, Colorado, to supply a million new people. But thirsty neighbouring states such as Arizona object, claiming that Las Vegas is wasteful. The city itself thinks it will win the battle. After all, its luck has held so far.

Americans have their cake and eat it

It is a dream come true, a tasty fat you can eat without putting on weight. **Jonathan Freedland** reports

ANAL leakage and fecal urgency are not words that go well with food. Loose stools and abdominal cramping can't be much good for business either. They are not sensations one would want to advertise on the label of a new product. Especially when the item in question could change the way we eat for ever.

Yet this is the price Procter & Gamble will pay for finding the dieter's Holy Grail: fat-free fat.

Last month, after two and a half decades of struggle, the US Food and Drug Administration gave P&G a green light to market olestra, the wonder substance which cooks and tastes like fat — but which passes through the body as if it were fat-free. Within months, the company will be selling Americans potato crisps and biscuits that taste like the real thing, but with half the calories and a fraction of the guilt.

The decision has brought delight to those who see olestra as a solution to the eternal conundrum: foods which are bad for you taste the best. But the FDA's move has also drawn fire from nutritionists who say olestra is a "crazy substance" that could cause cancer, heart disease and even blindness in the elderly.

That's in the long term. For now, there are those embarrassing side-effects including the evocatively-named fecal urgency (defined as the need to go *right now*). Under pressure, the Feds have demanded that olestra-cooked snacks become the first food item in the US to carry a health warning: "Olestra may cause abdominal cramping and loose stools. Olestra inhibits the absorption of some vitamins and other nutrients."

The warning is the culmination of one of the greatest sagas in the history of US food. Secret laboratories, embattled officials, and scientists with a mission have grappled for more than 25 years to satisfy an American public that wants to have its cake and eat it — to consume what it likes and to stay Hollywood slim. For olestra has struck at the heart of two American obsessions, the twin cravings for low weight and unfettered pleasure.

So much is at stake that, even though only a handful have tasted it, olestra is fast becoming a household name. If it works, the health of a nation where one in three people are obese could be radically improved. P&G could capture the entire $15 billion-a-year US market in salty snacks. The company has already invested more than $200 million in research, and hopes to claw back half of that within a year.

Here's how it works: olestra is not a fat substitute. It *is* fat, and behaves like it — except in the human body. Through clever chemistry, olestra passes through the gastrointestinal tract without ever being digested. As far as the human body is concerned, the fat simply hasn't been there. Olestra is, wrote one commentator, "the stealth missile of fat molecules".

The genius of the invention is that, unlike counterfeit fats, it doesn't degrade or break down when heated. That's what makes olestra a breakthrough: it can be used as a cooking oil in frying, serving up the mouth-watering prospect of fat-free chips and crisps. Under the new licence, P&G will be limited to selling snacks cooked in olestra. Eventually they hope to market the miracle product as an oil, under its commercial name Olean (slogan: "No fat, no compromises") so that people can cook with it themselves. If that happens, the dietary habits of America and beyond might truly be transformed.

SCIENTISTS have laboured on this overnight sensation since 1959. In the best penicillin tradition, biochemists at Procter & Gamble's Miami Valley research campus discovered it by accident. They were actually looking for a nutritional supplement for premature infants.

What they saw was that once six or eight fatty acids were attached to a sugar molecule, enzymes could not do their usual job of cutting them apart. The molecules simply passed through the intestines without being absorbed. Olestra fitted the bill perfectly.

Better still, olestra had the same texture as real fat, the same "mouth feel". The scientists began to experiment, putting on their aprons and cooking with olestra. "We tried out all kinds of foods, and this material was just a perfect substitute for fat," says Fred Mattson, a member of the original research team.

But a problem soon surfaced. In its prototype form, olestra was so liquid, it passed right through the body and came out the other end — the dreaded anal leakage. One witness at the FDA urged the Feds to ban it by conjuring up the image of a college athlete discovering his shorts had been stained — and suffering acute humiliation in the locker-room.

P&G insist they have corrected that trouble by making olestra more viscous. And, they say, olestra hardly invented anal leakage — some people suffer the problem when they consume too much fat of any kind.

Even so, there were enough other flaws in olestra to have kept the issue stalled between the Food and Drug Administration and P&G for the better part of a quarter of a century.

"This is the first food additive with negative nutritional value," fumes Michael Jacobson, director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a group which previously targeted popcorn and pasta in creamy sauces. "It actually flushes nutrients out of the body."

This is the most serious attack on olestra. It relates to the chemical's knack for picking up "passengers" on its way through the digestive tract. Vitamins A, D, E and K all hitch a ride with olestra — and pass through the body as if they were never there. Now the manufacturers have added those vitamins to olestra in advance — making it the molecular equivalent of a full car that can't pick up any extra passengers.

Still, other risks remain. Olestra washes out carotenoids, the nutrients found in green vegetables that are suspected — though not proven — to help safeguard against prostate and lung cancer, heart disease and muscular degeneration, the ailment which often robs the elderly of their sight. P&G has not been asked to compensate for the carotenoids because no one is yet certain of their purported benefits. "That's a very serious problem," warns Jacobson.

Even the defenders of olestra are hesitant. Bruce Chassy, a food scientist who sat on the federal panel that recommended olestra's approval, fears that consumers, reassured that an olestra-cooked snack is fat-free, will simply eat more of them or "compensate by eating other foods" — the Diet-Coke-and-a-doughnut syndrome. "My own personal preference would be for people to switch to healthier snacks, like fruit and vegetables," he says.

That's probably a vain hope, for Americans seem reluctant to give up the fatty foods which evolution has conditioned us to find delicious. American men will spend $24.95 on the Slenderising Man Shape Undergarment, which nips, tucks and sucks the flesh in all the right places. They'll buy the Butt Booster or the Man Band, to hold in a beer gut; they'll work out at the gym; they'll suffer liposuction. But eating habits seem as stubborn as a belly: they will not shift. This, after all, is the country where voters demand low taxes *and* more spending. Americans want to have it both ways, and olestra — the Ronald Reagan of nutrition — seems about to give it to them.



Pierrot power . . . Rupert Graves as Baptiste in Les Enfants du Paradis PHOTOGRAPH: NOBBY CLARK

A filmic paradise lost on stage

THEATRE
Michael Billington

INTELLIGENT people sometimes make grave mistakes. Simon Callow has described how he went to see Adrian Noble to discuss possible projects. When he mentioned staging Les Enfants du Paradis, Noble "jumped up, eyes blazing". Instead of which, you feel Noble should have poured them both a strong cup of black coffee. For the problem with the venture, which thudded on to London's Barbican stage last week, lies as much in the concept as the execution.

Superficially, you can see the idea's attraction. After all the famous 1945 film, written by Jacques Prévert, was described by its director, Marcel Carné, as "a tribute to the theatre". It deals with two celebrated actors, the mime Baptiste Debureau and the romantic Frederick Lemaitre, both in love with Garance. It seethes with backstage life and shows its two heroes at work on stage. And it is written in a sculpted poetic prose that at times achieves a Wildean dimension.

But, although adapted and directed by Simon Callow with obvious sincerity, it fiercely resists dramatisation for aesthetic, cultural and pragmatic reasons. As a film, it has a perfect formal integrity which is shattered the moment you dramatise it: in the same way the essence of great fiction is invariably lost in adaptation. More specifically, Carné's film has a visual poetry which simply cannot be translated into any other medium. From myriad examples in a four-and-a-quarter hour evening I will choose two.

One of the great moments in world cinema comes when Jean-Louis Barrault's Baptiste, playing a lovelorn Pierrot, glances into the wings and sees Lemaitre and Garance in intimate conversation: the camera lingers on Barrault's face which, in a few seconds, moves from fictitious sadness to authentic agony. It is a purely filmic moment which is rendered vulgarly silly here by a spotlight picking up the couple snogging in the wings: we get the action rather than Baptiste's reaction, which is what makes the scene cinematically unforgettable. A parallel moment occurs late on when the dandy-criminal Lacenaire — well played by Joseph Fiennes — goes to a Turkish baths to murder Garance's aristocratic protector. In the film Lacenaire walks out of frame and the camera stays on the horrified reaction of his accomplice, Avril. But in Callow's production we inevitably see the Count's throat being cut with a good deal of bloody medical materialism: once again cinematic poetry is turned into lumpen theatrical prose.

But there are profound cultural reasons why the attempt to stage Les Enfants du Paradis is doomed. The film was the product of a particular moment in French history, the occupied 1940s, and conceived about another from 1828 to 1840, when Romanticism was a liberating alternative to the nation's moral torpor. Les Enfants can be seen simply as a love story that transcends time. But it has a political dimension that is lost on a London audience in the 1990s.

In the end, however, there are purely pragmatic reasons why Callow's stage version seems interminably flat and dull. Robin Don has designed a revolving two-tiered set that tries to cope with the 50-plus scenes but that, both literally and metaphorically, creaks. What the cinema can achieve with a quick cut here has to be done with a slow revolve. A classic instance occurs when Lemaitre fights a duel with a travestied author. In the film we move in a second from the actor walking out of a shot to a poster outside his theatre saying "No performance". Is he dead or alive? But here the effect is totally dissipated as the stage trundles wearily round. To make matters worse, Simon Corder's lighting is dismal: I could hardly believe it when Garance's face was obscured as she declared her sexual availability to Baptiste.

And what of the acting? Helen McCrory's Garance actually transcends the murky lighting and is one of the two clearly-defined performances of the evening: she is young, mettlesome, sensual and not a little hysterical in her sense of being held captive by the Count de Monteray. Fiennes also gives Lacenaire clarity and sharpness by playing him with a Richelieu-beard and a sardonic languor.

But James Purefoy as Lemaitre lacks the self-delighting theatricality that should make his sudden discovery of true jealousy overwhelming: even the key Romantic notion that the actor is blood brother to the criminal gets lost. And Rupert Graves is hopelessly miscast as Baptiste: wan in the love scenes and, in the famous panto mime where Baptiste is driven by despair to purloin a frock coat, his large frame makes him look like a dangerous mugger.

But it is unfair to blame Callow entirely for a cumbersomely pointless evening. The buck stops with Noble, who should have realised that the qualities that make Les Enfants a great film — its visual poetry, its fluency of action, its historical necessity — are precisely those that militate against its translation to the stage. When will we learn that what gives life to a masterpiece is the perfect fusion of form and content and that great art is not a transferable commodity?

This Violetta is to die for

OPERA
Christopher Lambton

THIS IS now the third production of La Traviata to inhabit Nuria Espert's elegant design, first seen in 1989. Its massive doors and ornate pediments, weatherbeaten even at the start of the opera, aptly convey the fading glamour of Violetta's whirlwind existence. These austere sets have lost none of their original appeal in their new setting at Glasgow's Theatre Royal.

When the stage furniture is so familiar, it is easier to concentrate on the players. And this time Scottish Opera have, at last, drawn an ace. Anyone who heard Claire Rutter as the Countess in their most recent Figaro, or as the bubbly Terinka in Dvorak's Jacobin, would have been surprised to find her cast as Violetta in Traviata. These two recent performances did nothing to suggest that she could blossom and embrace one of Verdi's most demanding roles as though she had been singing it all her life.

From the first notes, casually heard above the mêlée of the Act 1 party, to her dying gasp, it is clear that Rutter is the Violetta of your dreams. From the honeyed sweetness of the lower register to an upper end glinting with steely determination, this is a voice that effortlessly matches the turbulent emotions of Verdi's score. A voice of such character supported by subtle but intense acting, is a rare discovery.

There is more very fine singing from Paul Charles Clarke as Alfredo, but alongside Rutter's charismatic performance his own attempts to confront the alternating tenderness and fury of the bourgeois lover seem rather stilted. Rene Massis, as Germont, is similarly wooden.

These performances, meticulously conducted by Richard Armstrong, are the more piquant for the restoration of numerous "traditional cuts". With something as well known as La Traviata, these little surprises are a welcome innovation.



Entrancing . . . Claire Rutter as Violetta PHOTOGRAPH: BILL COOPER

Lipstick, little 'uns and loads of lolly

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

LOOKING around **Painted Babies** (BBC2) for something to kick that was not actually wearing nappies and mascara, my eye fell on Tim. Tim was the master of ceremonies of the Southern Charm Pageant in Atlanta, Georgia, where five-year-old girls, primped to the teeth (and, in the case of Brooke, actually wearing false teeth) wiggled their way through torch songs. It looked as if Miss World had pupped.

Tim, a crooning compere, serenaded each one. Brooke's mother said he made the pageant. "Tim's just wonderful. He makes the pageant more classy. I tell him sometimes he's just gotta be a movie star. I'm extremely excited when I see Tim. I guess that's the word for it."

Brooke had clearly been told to twinkle roguishly at Tim, on the assumption that he would serenade her with something cute like Can't Help Falling In Love With You. Instead he sang "America! America! God shed His grace on thee!" very loudly indeed. Brooke, pre-programmed as a ballistic missile, twinkled and ogled according to plan. Tim, equally inflexible, gave God Bless The USA plenty of welly.

Painted Babies, produced and directed by Jane Treays, was something of a horror comic. I thought not of Shirley Temple but of Graham Greene writing about Shirley Temple. He judged her peculiarly attractive to middle-aged men and clergymen. "Shirley Temple acts and dances with immense vigour, but her popularity seems to rest on a coquetry quite as mature as Miss Colbert's and an oddly precocious body as voluptuous as Miss Dietrich's. Infancy with her is a disguise, her appeal is more secret and more adult. She is a complete totsy. Watch her swaggering stride . . . the way she measures a man with agile studio eyes, with dimpled depravity."

Only the organiser of the Atlanta pageant warned against any appearance of indecency. None of the parents seemed to notice that these children, doing Hey, Big Spender! numbers with feathers sprouting from every orifice, were like bright flies to queer fish.

Asia and Brooke, both five, were slugging it out for the crown. "Brooke has prettier clothes than Asia, but Asia can pull off her clothes just as well as Brooke."

Asia was rehearsing Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey with sobs. "Cry, baby, cry" coached her mother. Brooke was bumping and grinding her way through her number. "Go, go, go! Twirl! Wink at the judge!" said her mother. Perhaps Graham Greene should have tried that when the Lord Chief Justice described his review as a gross outrage.

Compering the beauty contest, Tim sounded oddly familiar. "Asia's hobbies include baby-sitting, shopping and swimming." "Brooke has blonde hair and blue eyes. Her hobbies include modelling, singing and dancing." Neither expressed a desire to do anything for world peace.

They looked like tiny Ivana Trumps. Each had had a $300 make-up and Brooke's smile was a credit to cosmetic dentistry. The secret of a sincere smile, her mother explained, is to twirl and, when your back is to the audience, yawn. Then twirl back, smiling. "She can probably hold it for about 20 minutes." The talent judge — and let's hear it, folks, for the talent judge — was thrown off the judging panel because she marked too low.

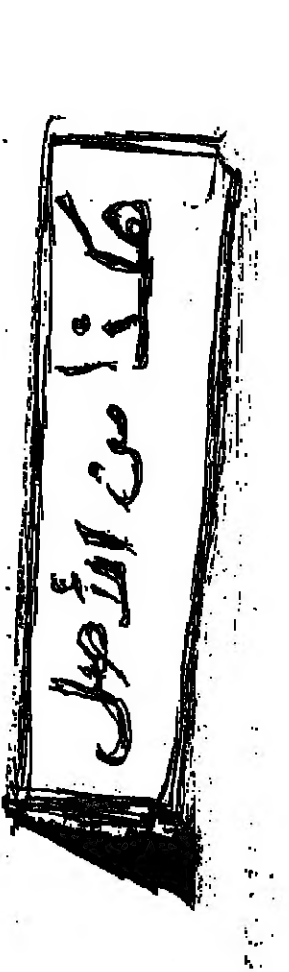
Mothers and grandmothers rebel-yelled their support. They seemed to reflect their child's act, mouthing each squeak, imitating every smirk. Or, perhaps, they were not receivers but transmitters, sending out powerful signals, making these radio-controlled toys dance.

The children jerked their chicken bone bodies in a parody of seduction. Randy Foggett, bless her, provided a moment of much need jollity: "As you see, when the skirt's removed we have a pair of shorts also trimmed in bugle beads". At which point the kid fell on her face. Brooke came on, shooting from the hip in her $1,000 cowgirl costume. "As Brooke removes her jacket, she wears a one-piece mini skirt, which has a halter top trimmed in stars. And, to cover her blonde curls, she wears a black hat triummed with gold and silver." Brooke's smile never slipped. Her denture dazzled.

She won $5,000, which brings her earnings up to $15,000, a Caribbean cruise, a bedroom suite and a car. I hope she has a good accountant.

Asia's mother was pretty noble about it for a while but that kind of thing is hard to keep up. "If they told me she was gonna win, I would not come back. Got a bad taste in my mouth." Brooke's mother said: "Quitters never win."

Brooke's frozen face, reflected in the wing mirror, was actually disturbing. Sullen, her hair ravelled like old rope, all smiled out.



Taking classicism to the cleaners

ART
James Hall

UNTIL THE 20th century, it was widely believed that serious sculpture began and ended with the Greeks. This put modern sculptors in an almost impossible bind: the highest form of praise was to say that a modern work was in the antique style, which meant it could be dismissed as derivative. These ambiguities are summed up in a famous story involving Michelangelo. He passed one of his own works off as an antique, after being told that an antique sculpture would fetch a far higher price than a Michelangelo.

By the late 19th century, there was a strong sense that sculpture had got itself into a stylistic strait-jacket. Henry James makes his fictional American sculptor Roderick Hudson complain that there are so few subjects he can treat compared to a painter.

As a neo-classicist, Hudson is unable to depict anything in the least bit ugly. His bloodless patron opines: "Spotless marble seems to me false to itself when it represents anything less than Conscious Temperance."

Since then, sculpture has been making up for lost time. From Rodin's Balzac to Picasso's punch-drunk absinthe glass, Conscious Intemperance is the name of the game. With Duchamp's urinal, the classicists met their Waterloo. This compact white cast, as spotless and smooth as Parian marble, hit them where it hurt. The world of ideal forms was not just being pastiched — it was being peed on!

Charles Saatchi's emporium in London may be a vast white cube, but it is a temple that is increasingly dedicated to the Gods of Conscious Intemperance. Over the past three years we've had five batches of young Brits, ranging from Hirst to Turk; now it's the turn of the young Americans, on show until March 3. The descendants of Roderick Hudson would probably think of themselves as multi-media artists rather than sculptors, yet sticking objects in space is definitely their day job.

Model machine . . . Charles Ray's Firetruck — 46ft of scaled-up toy

Janine Antoni takes classicism to the cleaners, and to the confectioners. Lick And Lather (1993) consists of two self-portrait busts, one made from chocolate, the other from soap. On completion, Antoni licked the former, and lathered the latter, eroding some of her features in the process. They are romantic ruins, pathetic monuments to self-consuming greed and vanity. Their sickly-sweet smell suffuses the gallery.

Two equally malodorous sculptures, both entitled Gnaw (1992), are displayed on marble plinths. One started out as a 600lb cube of chocolate, the other as a 600lb cube of lard. Antoni gnawed away at each block, then moulded the gobbed-out gobbits into confectionery boxes. The half-chewed cubes are like incomplete carvings: a woman's work, it seems, is never done.

Gregory Green's theme is world destruction. He makes home-made bombs by following the instructions in books borrowed from the library or bought through mail-order; a back room at Saatchi's has been turned into a grungy bomb-maker's lair.

Cult statues were once supposed to help people win wars. But Green's cult objects are something else. Nuclear Device #2 is spotlit in the middle of a darkened gallery. It is the Buddha of bombs: a glass sphere, riddled with wires, squats regally on an aluminium tripod.

Green claims that all you need to turn this technological octopus into a 15-kiloton bomb is a lump of plutonium. Plug it in at the mains, flick a switch and — before you know it — London is ancient history. I don't believe it for a second, but won't argue with big Mr G.

As it happens, the sculptures of Green's next-door neighbour, Charles Long, are in terminal meltdown. Jack And Jill, Mom Me, Friend (1995) is a series of amorphous blue blobs connected by umbilical cords. They are made from touchy-feely rubber and plastic.

This is dumb, but Sean Landers is even dumber. Landers has made a video called Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture. This is the title of a book by John Pope-Hennessy, a former Director of the V&A. But it doesn't look as though Landers got further than Michelangelo. In the video, the lanky-haired lad stands before us, clad in T-shirt and jeans. He does a strapping striptease in which he squirms around pastiching poses from the master. Just in case you didn't get the point — that Michelangelo's males are homoerotic and narcissistic — Landers grabs his not insubstantial member at regular intervals and gives it a size-enhancing squeeze.

Landers shows that if you reject idealism entirely, and go for no-holes-barred realism, this can be a narrow cul-de-sac too. What Michelangelo made sublime, Landers merely makes ridiculous. His hyperrealistic bronze sculpture, Singerie: Le Sculpteur (1995), underscores this point. It consists of two chimps, who touch each other. The sculptor is lowest of the low — a naked ape who "apes" nature unscrupulously in his art.

Many modern sculptors don't even bother apeing nature — they magpie it, and use found objects instead. Charles Ray does a bit of both. He mostly uses shop-window mannikins, then multiplies them or changes their scale. He was drawn to this type of imagery because he believes it is as stereotyped, in its way, as Greek statuary. His mannikins can be seen in the second part of this show (March 21 — May 12), but for now we have to make do with idolising his Firetruck (1993).

A toy firetruck has been scaled up to the size of a real firetruck — all 46.5ft of it. It is made from painted aluminium, fibreglass and plexiglass, and has been parked outside the gallery. Like any blown-up image, it becomes an alarming abstraction. It is an emergency in its own right, and it makes awestruck Lilliputians of us all.

A late 20th century Roderick Hudson could hardly complain that there aren't enough subjects for a sculptor to choose from. If anything, he would complain that there's too much choice, and that today's patrons demand an endless supply of space-invading sensations. You've only got to look at Jana Sterbak at the Serpentine to see the dangers. The variety of form and content is remarkable; but so too is the superficiality.

Mad about the girl

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

IT WOULD be nice to hail Michael Rymer's **Angel Baby** as the most extraordinary first feature from Australia in years. But the Australian cinema keeps on producing first features of real note, like Strictly Ballroom, Muriel's Wedding and Bad Boy Bubby. Even so, this stunning portrait of two Melbourne unfortunates, stuck in the time-warp of mental illness but loving each other enough to try to escape, makes Rymer as exceptional a prospect as any of those tyro directors.

The film is the centrepiece of Toohey's Australian Film Season — the first of what is intended as an annual event opening in London and progressing round Britain.

Both in its honest depiction of mental illness and of the often careless way the so-called civilised world deals with it, Angel Baby pulls few punches. It manages to marry popular, approachable film-making with an acute sensitivity and a pugnacious anger.

It is certainly not an "art film", but it is subtler and more uncompromising than most to the predicament of medical psychosis. John Lynch, who starred in Cal and In The Name Of The Father, is Harry, a schizoid loner living with a charitable Melbourne family and attending an open institution to which Jacqueline McKenzie's Kate is sent. He falls for her and she for him.

Setting up home together despite the doubts of the family to which Harry is attached, they face a dilemma once Kate gets pregnant. Does she have an abortion, have the baby and stop her drug treatment for the sake of the child, or does she simply have the baby while still on heavy medication?

Legally, it is her choice, no matter what the doctors insist. On this premise, Rymer constructs a kind of fairy-tale that suddenly becomes all too real.

The acting is superb. Lynch has never been better on film, projecting both a wounded charm and the enthusiasm of actually being able to love and protect someone with astonishing truthfulness. And McKenzie, who starred in Romper Stomper, gives a portrait of the waif-like Kate that is both funny and very moving.

Angel Baby received seven Australian Film Institute Awards and would undoubtedly have won more prizes had it gone round the festival circuit.

I'm not sure whether lovers of Victor Hugo will be disappointed or relieved to learn that Claude Lelouch's



Jacqueline McKenzie, star of the brilliant Angel Baby

Les Misérables isn't a straight adaptation of the classic novel. At 174 minutes, it seems almost as long as the book, but it's not as powerful.

It is, however, one of this once fêted but since oft-derided French director's better efforts, transporting us to and fro between the Jean Valjean of the novel and the life of Henri Fortin during the present century. Jean-Paul Belmondo plays both Valjean and Fortin.

Fortin is an ex-boxer who meets a cultured Jewish family during the Nazi occupation of Paris and drives them to apparent safety. On the journey, they read him Les Misérables. Fate then blows them all from one desperate situation to another.

Lelouch orchestrates it all with his usual attractive but rather hollow flair, which has so often suggested to his detractors that he has nothing whatsoever to say. But in this case he makes perfectly genuine points about how history hits the little man and how writers (ie, Hugo) can elucidate that fact better.

His cast is pretty good, with Michel Boujenah, Alessandra Martines and Salome Lelouch as the Jewish family.

The film lacks nothing in surface polish or sincerity. It just has no real depth of feeling. Even so, it's Lelouch's best work for years.

Valeri Todorowski's **Katia Ismailova** is an extremely free adaptation of Nikolai Leskov's classic 1864 novella. It's not the first adaptation of the story — Shostakovich's opera Lady Macbeth Of Mtensk is taken from the same source — but it is the most different, with Katia (subtly played by Ingeborga Dapkounaite) brought up to date as the typist, collaborator and daughter-in-law of a famous novelist, whose love affair with a carpenter working for the family is discovered.

Todorowski's quiet sunimation of a melodramatic plot, illustrated by Leonid Declatnikov's gentle, rather distinguished music, is set during summer in a dacha outside Moscow and speaks of desperation rather than obsession. It could be mistaken for a Russian version of an American pulp fiction if you didn't know the Leskov original or understand Todorowski's attempt to subvert the usual expectations by pushing the story into an alienated, present-day Russia. As a mood piece, though by no means entirely successful, it has some stunning moments. And Dapkounaite is a joy to watch.

I'm not at all surprised that someone has seen fit to revive Bruce Robinson's Withnail and I which, though made as late as 1987, even then seemed redolent of an earlier age. If this comedy of dissipated English manners doesn't inspire nostalgia along with its cult status, nothing will. The real point, though, is that it's extremely funny, as Richard E Grant's Withnail and Paul McGann's "I", two out of work and out-of-sorts actors, progress from their refuse-ridden London flat to the balmy countryside, only to find that Richard Griffiths's Uncle Monty has fitted them up with an even more inhospitable country retreat.

This was a time when British humour was still under the tutelage of Monty Python, but Robinson's sixties repartee, his carefully observant direction and the cast's obsessively accurate portraits of shabby eccentricity make for a good deal of wholly original joy.

A double life in fact and fiction

Malcolm Bradbury

Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life. Vol 1:
The World Before The War
by Max Saunders
Oxford 632pp £35

WITH BRITISH readers Ford Madox Ford is a writer who has never won fair credit. This is mysterious. His American reputation is substantial; he's acknowledged as what he was, a central figure, artistically and influentially, in the modern movement.

The unease still haunting his reputation has several sources. One is that in his day he made himself somewhat disreputable by his sexual affairs — which started with the abduction of his first wife, and moved on to a kind of honourable polygamy with Violet Hunt (aka Violent Hunt) and, when that collapsed in acrimony, with Stella Bowen. Largely for this reason, he left London after the first world war and moved to Paris, with something like a new identity, involving a name-change (Hueffer to Ford) brought about not, as sometimes thought, by anti-German sentiment but the problems of acquiring one more Mrs Hueffer.

The second identity was symbolic in other ways. Hueffer was a survivor of artistic environments and movements from the late Pre-Raphaelites onward. He had been an Impressionist with Henry James, Conrad and Stephen Crane, a Post-Impressionist and Imagist with Ezra Pound, a Vorticist of sorts with Wyndham Lewis. He venerated Hardy and Flaubert, Diderot and Turgenev, was music critic and composer, and formidable editor of the best literary magazine in Edwardian Britain, The English Review. He loved writers and writing, fiction and fable-making, and made a busy, gossipy fiction of his life. That world blew up into war; he fought, was wounded and suffered amnesia. The old world ended; so did the first modern movement; so did Hueffer.

In Paris in the twenties, the revised Ford took up the modern quest in the collapsed new order, becoming a crypto-American and part of the expatriate experiment. He edited the influential Transatlantic Review, and won the enmity of his assistant Ernest Hemingway, who pilloried him in A Moveable Feast. He also won the admiration of most of the expatriates, not least Ezra Pound, and spent most of the thirties in the US, teaching, among other things, creative writing. Part-forgotten at home, he made the mistake of dying in France a few days before new hostilities broke out; so fair reckoning of his achievement was obscured by greater events.

But retrospect (an art in which he excelled) has not been good to him either. Bowen famously described him as "a writer, and nothing but a writer", and he felt the same. That modesty led him to be taken at his word. His theoretical pronouncements and experiments, which have high importance, were found less solemn and binding than those of Eliot, Pound and Joyce. He was an incorrigible and inventive reminiscer, inclined to place himself at dinner tables he never attended, historical moments from which he had been unavoidably absent. Yet his reminiscences, in volumes like Thus To Revisit (1921) and It Was The Nightingale (1933), form an extraordinary record of the unfolding modernist scene from the 1880s on.

Because of the great artistic complexity of his life, and the fact that he knew (and helped) nearly all the modernist writers of three generations, he has been often the subject of biographies. Now comes the first volume of a large scale, sympathetic two-volume enterprise by Max Saunders, based on new sources and research, and a different view of the biographical problem.

The change of name in 1919, and Ford's insistence that he was homo duplex, a doubled and often divided consciousness, explains the subtitle of the book. For generations of writers pseudonyms or new names were both literary disguises and symbols of literary self-creation. And 1919 was a period of fundamental transition, not just in Ford's life but in European history and the modern arts. Ford's transferring identity was a bridge over historical and cultural crisis, and an expression of a man who saw himself doubled between man and artist. But this poses problems for the biographer. Ford was incorrigibly self-fictionalising; he textualised his life, which became the work, which hence presents itself like a great psycho-biography.

Saunders unravels the international artistic culture in which Ford grew up, and the domestic and legal crises, some comically absurd, some near-tragic, in which he embroiled himself. Interweaving biography with analysis and interpretation, he gives a studious and a strikingly substantial account of Hueffer's life up to the war (he will not actually become Ford until the next volume).



Ford Madox Ford: a multiplicity of personalities

This first volume shows Ford's complicated, argumentative place in Britain's first avant garde, his acts of honour and of self-deception, his enormous literary self-consciousness. It studies the writings as much as the life, and culminates in an extended account of The Good Soldier, which is given a rigorous and enlightening reading.

Saunders's biography will be welcomed as a serious and invaluable interpretation which enables us to look at Ford's dual life — on the page and off it — with much greater complexity.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

War of the Worlds: The Assau[lt] on Reality, by Mark Slouka (Abacus, £9.99)

ONE DOES hear an e[...] amount about how cyberspa[ce,] the virtual world, the Internet c[om]munity, or what you will, is an [un]stoppable revolution offering us unlimited scope to play with [our] imaginations and liberate us fr[om] our tiresome physicality. Well, [Mark] Slouka has had enough. Virtual[...]ity, he says, means reducing ou[r ...]tions, stripping us of our huma[nity] and our capacity to interact with [the] outside world. This is every [techno]fearer's dream book, a full-on [as]sault on the gushing fatuities of [the] new dream-weavers: passiona[te,] lucid and scary.

The Wig My Father Wore, by Anne Enright (Minerva, £6.9[9])

MAGIC realism is back. G[...] the narrator, who works [for] the Irish equivalent of Blind D[ate,] finds an angel — a former sui[cide] working his way up the hierarch[y,] waiting to give her a hand with [...] It has the scatty intensity typic[al of] the genre; sentences like "My fa[ther] hated cameras but he put a mir[ror] in every room, because they fo[llow] you when you walk away." Very [well] done and a convincing sketch [of] Dublin society.

Plays, Volume 1, by Alan Bennett (Faber, £8.99)

FORTY YEARS ON, Getting O[n,] Habeas Corpus and Enjoy, [span]ning 1968 to 1980. "With the ex[cep]tion of Habeas Corpus," Be[nnett] writes in his introduction, "all th[ese] plays are too long." Not a prob[lem] when you read them, and F[orty] Years On, in particular, extr[ava]gantly studded with gags, should [be] on your bookshelf. Getting On, fr[om] 1971, also contains the peren[nial] proleptic dilemma of a Labour [MP] wondering what school to send [his] children to.

The Oxford Book of Money, edited by Kevin Jackson (Oxford, £8.99)

OXFORD'S idea of publicising [its] books is, it would sometime[s] seem, to bury them in a locked strongbox and shoot anyone wh[o] comes near them, but do not let tha[t] deter you from seeking out this an[]thology. Staggeringly eclectic and endlessly informative: an exhilarat[]ing vapour of resentment and cupid[]ity steams off every page.

Popism, by Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett (Pimlico, £10)

WARHOL'S memoirs of the 1960s: the prequel, if you like, to his diaries (which always gav[e] the impression of having started after the interesting stuff had fin[]ished). The same wry, deadpan, cunning yet artless prose style, fewer celebrities, but more interest[]ing people; from Billy Name, who cracked up, to Lou Reed, who didn't.

Heaven help us

Jenny Turner

Children of Darkness and Light
by Nicholas Mosley
Secker & Warburg 241pp £15.99

Angels and Men
by Catherine Fox
Hamish Hamilton 374pp £16

IF ANGELIC visitations did not really happen, human beings would just have to imagine them. Angelus the messenger, bringing glad tidings from God: what an image, what a conduit, what a brilliant way of connecting the limitless possible to the dull and fleshly real.

Modern, technological transformations of the old Christian idea of the angelic are intellectually in at the moment, thanks to the recent publication of a book on the subject by the French philosopher, Michel Serres. But although God may indeed have died a long time ago, the imaginative usefulness of angels has never really gone away.

At the level of plot, Nicholas Mosley's latest novel will sound like a boring BBC thriller. Heavy-drinking journalist with marital problems is sent to Cumbria to investigate a tribe of feral children who claim to be in contact with the Virgin Mary. While doing so, he stumbles upon a red alert at the local nuclear power plant.

But Mosley is more of a poet than he might at first appear. He has long been a lucid and committed stylist of the minimalist sort. There is nothing he likes better than to force all sorts of confused, over-determined ideas through the small-grained sieve of his pared-down grammar, causing them to emerge all neat and deceptively simple on the other side. "The boys were cutting slices from a loaf and they put these on the table. No one spoke. I thought — you mean, old God, we are building that tower to heaven?" Mosley, as you can see, likes to focus his attention not on the merely sacramental, but on how exactly a rational modern sacrament might be made to work through language. Typically, he does this by means of that wonderful little gasping-space, marked with a dash, both linking and utterly separating the world of fact from the paradise and hell of the hero's fervid thought.



Roger van der Weyden's 'St Michael Weighing Souls' (detail) in Angels: A Modern Myth by Michel Serres (Flammarion, £30)

But a perennial problem with minimalism is that, sooner or later, one is tempted to reach for a resolution. The tension just keeps building until the writer suddenly gives up and chucks all the remaining lumps into an all-purpose blender, just to keep the patterning regular and smooth. And for Mosley, and for 1990s artists interested in God and science generally, the big lump-dissolving temptation is chaos theory — brand-new but already worn-out.

Catherine Fox's Angels And Men is set in an unnamed northern university town which is clearly Durham. Mara, the traumatised daughter of an Anglican vicar, has come to write her MA dissertation on women in evangelical cults.

Mara's digs are situated a mere hop away from the local theological college, which turns out to be full of variously dishy trainee priests. All of them, naturally, fancy Mara. She, equally naturally, spends her time developing anorexia, agonising about her family, and studying far too hard. Mara also sees angels, which have a habit of emerging like this: "A dream, said her rational mind, and yet a part of her knew better. A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible. . ." Oh, for heaven's sake.

Just because we were all of us self-important 22-year-olds once, doesn't mean it does us much good to be reminded of it.

All the Queens' men

David Horspool

Monarchy & Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I
by Susan Doran
Routledge 279pp £25

Elizabeth: A Biography of Her Majesty the Queen
by Sarah Bradford
Heinemann 320pp £20

SIR THOMAS SMITH, a young diplomat and courtier of the first Elizabethan age, had some advice on marriage for his seemingly reluctant queen. In his Dialogue of the Queen's Marriage, a character warns that a foreign prince might "bring in the manners and conditions of the country he liketh best" and "frame her Majesty . . . to his bow". The Virgin Queen famously rejected a string of suitors as long as Penelope's, from Robert Dudley at home to, among others abroad, Prince Eric of Sweden, Archduke Charles of Austria, the Earl of Arran and even Philip II of Spain. But, as Susan Doran brilliantly demonstrates in Monarchy And Matrimony, they all fell by the wayside for far more complicated reasons than those encapsulated in Smith's xenophobia.

Marriage looms large in Sarah Bradford's biography of the present Elizabeth, and there is a revealing quotation from another courtier, Tommy Lascelles, at the time of the Princess's own plans to marry Prince Philip of Greece. Lascelles reported that most courtiers "felt he was rough, ill-mannered, uneducated and would probably not be faithful". Though just under 400 years had passed, little appeared to have changed in the court's opinion of outsiders. Bradford reports "a friend" who tells us that: "He [Philip] shouts at the Queen sometimes . . . and she doesn't mind. It's as if she thinks that's how husbands behave."

From one to another . . . Elizabeths I and II show the changing face of the monarchy from Tudor to Windsor PHOTOMONTAGE JOHN WORMLEY

At the time of Elizabeth's accession to the throne, Philip remarked that the "House of Mountbatten now reigned" — precisely the sort of thing that Elizabeth I's subjects feared any prospective husband might get into his head. Elizabeth II's instant response with her government, which put Philip right about that misconception, might almost lead us to believe that Thomas Smith is on Her Majesty's shelves, were it not for Bradford's confirmation that: "She practically never reads a book unless it is horse related."

Bradford's discussion of the background and state of the Queen's marriage is a prelude to a discussion of her consort's fidelity. In raking up tabloid rumours, of decades past, that Prince Philip was unfaithful, Bradford confirms the impression which Doran gives in her book that there are certain persistent themes in royal biography. Not that fidelity was ever a subject to be raised directly in connection with Elizabeth I; her failure to marry, as well as her access to more frightening sanctions than a stiff Palace denial, ensured that. What persists is gossip. Elizabeth I's favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was widely seen as her most likely choice of husband. Doran writes that "rumours of Dudley's intimacy with the Queen not only spread through the English court but were carried by foreign ambassadors to those abroad". The fact that Dudley was married during the time he was getting intimate only fuelled the rumours, which reacted as if petrol had been poured on them when Dudley's wife Amy fell to her death down a set of "but eight steppes".

Doran engages reluctantly but unflinchingly with the inevitable suggestions that Dudley was somehow involved in the death, proposing "if pressed" that Amy was most likely to have committed suicide. Bradford, on the other hand, is content simply to recycle old gossip without editorial comment, giving credence to unsubstantiated stories of Philip's indiscretions without bothering to argue the case. She could hardly be expected to have left the question out, but retiring from a verdict in this way seems disingenuous.

Susan Doran's explanation of how Elizabeth I went about not getting married (though she never silenced the gossip) allows the author to demonstrate a sure touch with both the private and the public material at her disposal. Doran is as happy discussing the complex religious politics which lay behind Elizabeth's consideration of the suits of Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist contenders, as she is on the details of Elizabeth's "favourite pastimes of hunting and riding".

Doran mentions Elizabeth I's love of outdoor pursuits, but does not say whether she kept any pets (unless you count Dudley). Our Queen has the corgis, of course, and they merit rather drawn-out treatment by Bradford, who reveals that "Elizabeth feeds them herself at 5pm". Elizabeth I may have had less time for pets, as she had less time for a husband. A famous story has it that she declared herself to be married to her country, and so to have no need of a husband, because she was consumed by the "publick care of governing the kingdom".

Elizabeth II's devotion to public duty has never been questioned, but despite Bradford's attempts to scratch at old wounds, she does have a successful marriage to a real live husband. It is no surprise to learn that her dream is rather less grand, consisting of a retirement to enjoy that marriage on a country estate near Clitheroe.

IT IS perhaps in the gulf between these two dreams — one statesmanlike, concerned with posterity, the other a version of any of her subjects' retirement fantasies — that the difficulty in writing a biography of a contemporary queen lies. Sarah Bradford has written well-received books on historical subjects as disparate as Cesare Borgia and George VI; recent works on the monarchy and the constitution and the monarchy and welfare, by Vernon Bogdanor and Frank Prochaska, have shown how the Queen can be dispassionately observed. But a straight biography of a living public figure who has of necessity achieved so little (as distinct from the duty she has performed) is likely to consist mainly of gossip and trivia. There is no real sense, other than the commercial, in which such a book could be successful.

The traders with the Baltic states who favoured a match between Elizabeth I and Eric of Sweden would have explained that there is some consolation in commercial success. But, as Susan Doran demonstrates of the Virgin Queen, it need not be an overwhelming motivation.

Evangelical critic in search of souls

Francis Spufford

No Passion Spent: Essays 1978-1996
by George Steiner
Faber 442pp £19.99

The Deeps of the Sea and other fiction
by George Steiner
Faber 405pp £12.99

READING well performed, *lecture bien faite*, is the act this collection of essays prizes above all others. There's a pudgy bloke on the cover, painted by Chardin in 1734, who has put on a fur hat and robe to turn the huge cream pages of a folio. This rumpled formality was, writes Steiner, a courtesy owed to the text under the classical regime of reading — the preliminary to an interchange of scruple and intelligence that (mourns Steiner) has drowned in the noise of the 20th century. His evocation of the painting's lost world of reading, in the first piece, is seductive because it requires an attention at least analogous to the "classical" reader's readiness to annotate; offering in return a sense that you participate in the strenuous making of a reading.

Steiner's heroes of reading range from Charles Peguy at the turn of the century back to the great Talmudic and Biblical commentators who enshrined scripture in an ark of citation and cross-reference. The religious reverence for text is a prime counterweight in his argument with critical theories he sees as threatening meaning. He has deliberately selected canonical subjects for these essays (Homer, Shakespeare, Kafka); and just as deliberately employed the resources of theology. There's nothing cynical about this. Steiner is an evangelical critic: he wants your soul for meaning.

What there lacks in these readings, though, is any non-textual experience, any social history, any developed relationship between language and power. There's a desultory innocence to those moments when Steiner intends to supply context, as when he complains about music replacing reading since the 18th century and there being no more private libraries, as if he were speaking about changes in the behaviour of the same readership, who've given up codexes for hip-hop. The centre of gravity always remains within the text.

This means that Steiner's pictures of the involvement of culture with violence always slide towards causality. Ideas, words, don't just play a part in history; they make things happen. In Bluebeard's Castle, the book that launched his reputation in the 1960s, doesn't just argue that European romanticism and literary unreason were implicated in the Holocaust: it makes of them the seed from which the Shoah grew. In the same way, here, readers who encounter printed horrors are not just glimpsing the spoor of history; they are placed in the moral cockpit as they sit with a book open; and what they find are the active principles of violence, hate and anti-Semitism. For instance, "Two Cocks" and "Two Suppers" compare the deaths of Socrates and Jesus.

The original events, the written accounts, and the later iconography of Golgotha and the hemlock drink, all fuse together. Steiner then reads the departure of Judas from the Last Supper as the ejection of "the Jew" into an "utter darkness" which "is already that of the death-ovens". Complex iconic point of origin becomes clinched cause.

Another thing strangely absent is . . . fiction. It isn't just that Steiner is high-minded, but that his sensibility points away to some extent from the incomplete and asymmetric ambitions of the novel. He likes the narrative impulse in the compacter forms of poem, drama, history, treatise. This is criticism that comes close to preferring the sense in which "a great philosophy is always stylish", commanding a precise verbal presence, to the sometimes purely immanent intention of a novel's mass of dialogue and description.

So it jangles expectation pleasurably to turn from the essays to a book of collected fiction. Steiner the fictionist knows the odd thing that Steiner the critic does not (especially about dumb motives), but the fictions work in confident parallel with the concerns of the criticism. Indeed some of them are twinned with essays. If they read discursively, that is because their elements are still above all ideas — ideas beautifully animated and articulated.

Barminess in Baghdad

Lucy Atkins

Interesting Facts About the State of Arizona
by Jeremy Poolman
Faber 251pp £8.99

INTERESTING Facts About The State Of Arizona is a masterpiece of a title for a debut novel which, far from containing interesting facts about this desert state, questions the whole notion of what constitutes fact or, for that matter, fiction.

The story begins with the death of an "ex-Elevator Association employee", the nonagenarian Ethan Pieree. Instead of a final heavenly ascension, however, Ethan is resurrected after a day or two as a corpse, his house having been struck by lightning during a freak storm. Left electrically charged (he can start cars with flat batteries), he becomes a point of connection for the numerous characters around whose overlapping lives the novel is structured. The resulting miscellany of viewpoints demonstrates the impossibility of defining one "reality" (fictional or otherwise). In an old but reliable trope, each event means something different depending on who is interpreting it.

The rather desperate barminess of the world Poolman creates ensures that the book is a delight to read, regardless of your affection for literary trends.

Centring on the small town of Baghdad, Arizona, the plot is peppered with inscrutables: blind men who can see, indistinguishable twins, televisions which talk back.

The desert itself, far from being a hackneyed literary device, acts as a breathing canvas over whose dusty surface the ant-like humans cross and recross in search of escape or reconciliation.

The tenderness of the writing infuses the whole book with a humanity and optimism which may seem at odds with its insistence upon the uncertainties of existence: "There's no situation so bad that it's too bad to get turned around." The book ends where it began, with the death of Ethan. That it is his second death somehow doesn't seem odd, given the infinite potential contained in this unhinged community.

A modern cover story

Colin Luckhurst

IN THE low light of a misty January morning, on farmland just below the limestone scarp to the east of Chipping Sodbury, it made a memorable tableau. Two horses, under light control in the post- and rail-fenced schooling paddock, were engaged in the entirely natural acts of equine courtship foreplay.

Martin Boyle, a veterinary surgeon, stood close by in order to seize the moment to interpose an artificial vagina over the erect organ of the sexually aroused stallion and to catch his ejaculate for a quick deep freeze and subsequent distribution to recipient mares in Europe and Australia.

It worked. Grace, the teaser mare, who was thoughtfully provided with felt boots that she might not, with a kick born of ecstasy or frustration, damage the serving stallion, the splendid Catherston Dazzler, stood still.

The stallion mounted her after some preliminary whinnying and his erection was manually redirected into the artificial vagina which, warmed with hot water, catches the semen. The dropping tail and the wrinkling flanks are signs to those in the know that he has made it.

The ejaculate is quickly taken inside to be checked, centrifuged, treated, and frozen in marked straws in liquid nitrogen at minus 196 degrees Celsius, at which temperature it has an indefinite life. I had a look at a sample through the microscope as the semen of Matador, a pony stallion, who already has foals in Australia, was checked. Tiny tadpoles swam vigorously in the field of vision.

I visited the stables of the West Kington Stud at the invitation of Tessa Clarke, the stud manager. She has launched this initiative with the owner, Jane Holderness-Roddam, a successful three-day eventer with victories at Badminton and Burghley behind her. It makes available to an international market the frozen semen of champion competition stallions.



ILLUSTRATION: GEOFF JONES

These great stallions are splendid beasts, with track records of success in the three-day show jumping and dressage competitions. They come to West Kington so their valuable potential to sire progeny may be made available on an international market. It is cheaper than sending horses by air freight around the world for a hit-and-miss meeting with the mare.

I read the timetable — four stallions were due to meet Grace that morning, another four the following day. What poor Grace, the long-suffering teaser mare in season but not getting fertilised, made of it all, it is hard to imagine. Perhaps she is flattered by the attention of so many suitors.

The vet was in attendance to ensure that the licensing terms set out by the Ministry of Agriculture were duly observed. He has a specialist interest in equine artificial insemination and explained how a veterinary input is necessary both at this stage and at the stage when the mare, wherever she may be, is to receive the insemination.

THESE proceedings, on a gloomy January morning, took place under the terms of the first licence granted under European Community regulations governing the trade in frozen equine semen.

I fell to speculating that if the bloodstock industry, which currently insists on natural covering, accepted this technique then some flat race classic winners could also be spreading their genetic inheritance more widely.

Apparently the technique works with camels, too.

Chess Leonard Barden

MATTHEW SADLER, the 21-year-old British champion, has won the £3,000 Leigh Grand Prix for the best overall 1995 results in UK congresses. His rival, Midlands GM Keith Arkell, made it a close race and took the lead with a week to go, before Sadler went ahead in the final Leigh event at Islington.

The Leigh Prixette for women and the Junior Prix for under-21s went to the rising stars Harriet Hunt and Jonathan Parker, while the Amateur Prix for grading-limited tournaments had 10 players averaging over 80 per cent.

To compete you should consult the BCF calendar for congresses taking place near you, collect entry forms from congress bookstalls, play in as many qualifying events as possible. Above all, aim high. You will inevitably have weekends when gleeful opponents fork your rooks or scoop your pawns and Sunday morning becomes a time to regret learning the moves, but such disasters are omitted from Amateur Prix totals. What matters are your scores of 4/5, 5/6 or better, and you need at least three of these.

The most popular grading-limited events are for under-160 and under-130 grades, so if the annual BCF list assesses you at 155 or 128 there should be several good opportunities. To win the Amateur Prix, you must score 5/5 or 6/6 at least once; in 1995 that was the difference between the prizewinners and the near-missers.

Weekend and one-day congresses often have poor conditions which affect the play, so a repertoire which includes off-beat openings and traps will help crush weaker opponents quickly and conserve energy for the hard games.

A routine scan of the board every move for actual or imminent blunders on both sides will also pay off. An unusual gambit helped Sadler clinch the Grand Prix at Islington:

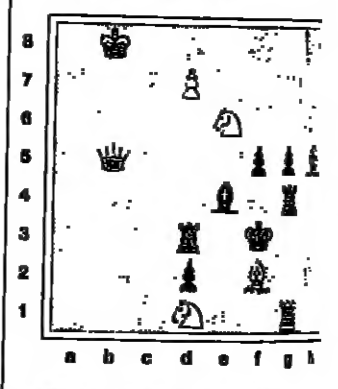
M Sadler-N Regan, Clarendon Court Defence, Islington 1995

1 d4 c5 2 d5 f5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 d6 5 e4!? Sadler's new gambit idea, which he orginally prepared for the CC's originator Jon Levitt, who named the opening after the block of flats where he lives. **fxe4 6 Ng5 Bf5 7 f3** White has obvious designs on the light squares e6, f7 and f5, so Black should now consider returning the pawn by 7... e3.

exf3 8 Qxf3 Bg4? Black is going to suffer for a while, so should put another pawn in the kitty by Bxc2. **9 Qf2 a6 10 Be2 Bxe2 11 Qxe2 Nbd7 12 0-0 Ne5 13 Bf4 Nf7 14 Ne6** The old world champion Steinitz wrote, "If you can settle a knight at d6 or e6, lie go to sleep and let the game win itself."

Qd7 15 Rad1 Nd8 16 Bg5 Nxe6 17 dxe6 Qc6 18 Bxf6 gf 19 Qh5+ Kd8 20 Nd5 Rc8 21 Rxf6! The decisive breakthrough. **exf6 22 Qf7 Qe8 23 Qxf6+ Bd 24 Nxe7 Kc7 25 Nxc8 Kxc8 26 e7 Rg8 27 Rxd6 Resigns.**

No 2407



White mates in two moves, against any defence (by J Wartm 1926). Most competitors at a leading UK tournament failed to find the key.

No 2406: 1 Qa6. If Ke3 2 Nc5, or Kf3 2 Nf2, or Kd5 2 Qc6, or Kf5 2 Qg6, or f3 2 Qe6.

Quick crossword no. 300

Down

1 Astrological prediction (9)
8 Pay attention — or bend over (4)
9 Chivalry, courage (9)
10 Near — average (4)
13 Emulate (5)
15 Mint (6)
16 Impede — with a basket? (6)
17 Revoke (6)
19 Trader — at the card-table (6)
20 Bet (5)
21 Record — a piece of music (4)
24 Pointed out (9)
25 Merit (4)
26 Doorstep (9)

Down

2 Spoken (4)
3 Leer (4)
4 Frank (6)
5 Outcast (6)
6 Tropical fruit (9)
7 Travel plan (9)
11 Pirate (9)
12 House furnishings (9)
13 Renovate (5)
14 Stratum (5)
18 Craft — project (6)
19 Foul — pass (6)
22 Ill-considered — break-out (4)
23 Fit — a spring (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

HOW DO you feel about coming second? Normally I'd regard it as the worst thing in the world — to have come within an inch of victory and fail at the last fence is altogether worse than having run the whole race in the middle of the field.

But in October last year I played in a tournament that was so much fun I almost didn't mind finishing second. The event was the annual Sun, Sea and Slams tournament in Barbados. I was playing with the American international Neil Silverman, to whom I once finished second in the World Championship final, which really did hurt!

At game-all on the last hand of the pairs tournament, playing against the only pair in the field who can overtake you for first place, you pick up these cards:

♠2 ♥KQJ752 ♦AQ85 ♣Q6

I always enjoy holding good distributional hands, and my pleasure at the sight of this one was enhanced when my partner opened the bidding with one diamond. We were playing a five-card major system, so there was no guarantee of a great diamond fit, but I decided to force to game immediately with two hearts.

Neil cheered me up still further by raising to three hearts, but, with nothing to spare for my initial force to game, I contented myself with four hearts. Neil now made a cue bid of four spades, showing the ace.

What would your next call be? Well, if partner could proceed beyond game voluntarily, I felt that there ought to be good chances of slam. I might have asked for aces with a Blackwood 4NT, but it is not good practice to do this with a club holding such as Qx. I therefore decided to make a return cue bid of five diamonds, knowing that Neil would not go to slam unless he had some My partner leapt to six hearts — he had control of the club suit, all right, but that was not the problem, as the full deal shows.

East, Dave Blackman from Barbados, was too much of a gentleman to double. But he wasn't too proud to take his aces and defeat me by a trick; nor did he seem noticeably upset when he and his partner, Tony Watkins, went up to collect the trophy instead of us. Still, if there had been a prize for the best comment in a post-mortem, my partner would have won it easily. "You should have had at least one more ace," I complained. "You should have had at least one less pina colada," retorted Neil.

North
♠AK
♥10863
♦K1084
♣K95

West
♠J97653
♥4
♦J97
♣J108

East
♠Q1084
♥A9
♦32
♣A7432

South
♠2
♥KQJ752
♦AQ85
♣Q6

South	West	North	East
Zia		Neil	
		1♦	No
2♥	No	3♥	No
4♥	No	4♠	No
5♦	No	6♥	No
No	No		

The 1996 Barbados Sun, Sea and Slams tournament runs October 18-27. Call the Barbados Tourist Authority on (+44) 171-636 9448, or Trixie Simmons in Barbados itself on 00 1 809 426 1886

Rugby Union Five Nations Championship: Scotland 19 France 14



Craig Joiner and Scott Hastings hold back Christian Califano during the victory which ensured that Scotland maintained their 100 per cent record in the Five Nations Championship PHOTO: DAVID GIBSON

It's just a doddle for Dods

Ian Malin at Murrayfield

FRANCE seem to bring the best out of Scotland. The Auld Alliance has produced three memorable internationals in the past 12 months. A last-minute try by Gavin Hastings took the spoils in Paris a year ago, Emile Ntamack turned the tables on the Scots in the World Cup three months later, and on Saturday Michael Dods did the trick to keep Scotland on course for the Grand Slam.

On paper Scotland had little chance against a side who had beaten New Zealand and England in the past three months and could justifiably claim to be the leading side in Europe. With all due respect to David Hilton, Ian Smith and Eric Peters, the England-based players in Scotland's pack, they are hardly blood-curdling Rob Roys, but all three had major games against a pack on average 10kg heavier.

"Not bad for wee men, eh?" said Kevin McKenzie, Scotland's 5ft 6in hooker, giving the key to this rousing win. Scotland's front row, small by international standards, had held its own against the mighty French scrummagers.

There is an irresistible symmetry in Scotland's current position, with links to 1984 and 1990. A victory over a callow Wales side in Cardiff, and March 2 will bring Will Carling's England back to Edinburgh and haunting memories of six years ago.

As in 1984 and 1990, Scotland have found an irresistible half-back combination to pull the strings. For Laidlaw and Rutherford, Armstrong and Chalmers, read Brian Redpath and Gregor Townsend. They were contentious choices when the championship began, yet after two games they are the best combination in the Five Nations. Redpath created both tries for Dods. Both moves also featured Townsend, who showed the fly-half's ability to think on his feet and keep the opposition guessing.

Redpath and Townsend were at the heart of a Scotland game plan that involved winning quick ruck ball and moving it wide and away from the bigger French pack. The opening 10 minutes were as fast and furious as anything that will be seen in this year's championship.

But if the frenetic pace was a coach's nightmare, it also helped to sharpen Scottish reflexes.

One bone-jarring tackle by Hastings on Abdel Benazzi in the second half was similar to that of his brother Gavin on the same charging flanker in Paris last spring.

And on the subject of brothers, Peter Dods was the full-back in the 1984 Grand Slam campaign. Little brother Michael came of age here. His tries would have done justice to his opposite number, Philippe Saint-André, but six missed kicks at goal are a cause for concern.

England 21 Wales 15

England take the low road to victory

Robert Armstrong at Twickenham

ENGLAND have registered a new patent in Mogadon rugby which could paralyse Scotland's hopes of winning the Five Nations Championship and perhaps a Grand Slam in next month's clash at Murrayfield.

The essence of this turgid approach is to weary the limbs and dull the wits of the opposition by keeping the ball safely out of sight while the forwards trundle crab-like downfield.

Slow ball is the very antithesis of modern Test rugby, which puts a premium on generating momentum and pace, yet those were the very qualities England successfully drained out of a young and enterprising Welsh side. Not for the first time Will Carling's men were so desperate to secure a win that they were willing to sacrifice their own three-quarters and any prospect of a scoring feast on the altar of workplace efficiency.

If England persist with the eight-man game, scrummaging and mauling to their hearts' content, they may well end up with the Triple Crown but they will also continue to alienate their own supporters, many of whom ran through the full repertoire of rude noises as the game slowly died on its feet.

The England manager Jack Rowell pointedly passed the buck back to the players, explaining that they had put together their own game plan with the captain's approval. That was hardly surprising news in view of the flak Rowell has copped this season for talking up a 15-man game only to deliver a ponderous travesty on the field.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that Rowell needs to enlist a specialist coach to turn some of his forwards into bolder footballers, prepared to treat the backs as potential match-winners and not just optional extras. The England try-scorers, Underwood and Guscott, proved they are still dangerous finishers at the highest level, and the scrum-half Dawson showed he has a nose for the try line, yet overall this was a *déjà vu* exercise in how to squander talent.

Carling had the frustration of being forced out with a knee injury in the 53rd minute just when his urgent calls for a more dynamic game were starting to be heeded. Instead of taking up the captain's torch, Clarke, the pack leader, promptly pulled England back into their shell, advising Grayson to kick for touch.

No doubt England felt unable to get into top gear because, for the second game running, they could not remedy their shortcomings in the line-out.

If England comprehensively failed in a perceived area of strength, they at least had the grim satisfaction of overpowering their counterparts in the scrums, rucks and mauls.

Among the 10 Welshmen making their first Five Nations appearance at Twickenham, the half-backs Arwel Thomas and Robert Howley suggested that they are on the verge of a long Test career together.

Sports Diary Shiv

TV battle rag

AS THE BATTLE over the televising of flagship sports events intensified in Britain, the National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, found herself at the centre of a bitter row for publishing a consultative document on the subject just four days before a vote in the House of Lords on the Broadcasting Bill.

In it she appears to reject curbs on Rupert Murdoch's Sky Sports, arguing that the channel had increased the screening of events on television from 3,000 hours a year to more than 12,000. She said: "The Government recognises the concern that a core of sporting events should be freely available to the nation. But it is concerned that ill-thought through changes could deprive sports of a primary source of income."

Her move was denounced by a cross-party alliance of peers, including former Conservative minister, Lord Peyton, who described it as a "rather grubby manoeuvre". The peers have tabled an amendment to the bill which would bar subscription channels from gaining exclusive access to eight "listed" sports events, including Wimbledon, the Grand National, the Olympic Games and the World Cup.

According to the BBC, Mrs Bottomley's consultation document relies heavily on data supplied by BSkyB. The Lords vote on the amendment is due later this week and it was widely believed that the Government will be defeated.



ROGER STANISLAUS of Leyton Orient *(above)* has become the first English footballer to be banned for drug-taking. An FA disciplinary commission has suspended him for a year after he was found guilty of taking cocaine on a match day. The growing use of drugs in sport claimed another casualty when Dean Thomas, a 17-year-old weightlifter became the first junior athlete in Britain to test positive for Ecstasy. Thomas faces a possible four-year ban if a second sample confirms the positive result.

SCOTLAND and Everton striker Duncan Ferguson will not have to serve the remaining seven games of a 12-match suspension after winning his appeal against the sentence. In a judicial review, the judge, Lord Macfadyen, ruled that the Scottish FA's disciplinary committee acted beyond its powers in imposing the punishment. Ferguson's sentence was handed out after he headbutted John McStay of Raith Rovers while playing for Rangers. The striker was su... victed of assaulting McSt... last year served half of a ... month prison sentence in a Glasgow prison — the first British footballer to go to jail for an on-field incident.

Everton sought a judicial review of the case on the grounds that if Ferguson was to serve his full suspension from football he would have been punished twice for the same offence. The quashing of the ban means Ferguson will now be able to challenge for a place in the Scotland squad for the European Championship final this summer.

BIRMINGHAM City have been ordered by the Football Association to play one game behind closed doors as punishment for the crowd trouble at their home game with Millwall last November. The penalty, suspended until the end of this year, will be activated by "any serious misconduct involving Birmingham or their supporters either at home or away".

KATJA SEIZINGER wrapped up the World Cup skiing title by sweeping to three victories in three days last week. The German jumped into the lead with wins in a super giant on Friday and a downhill on Saturday. On Sunday, she finished another super-G in Val d'Isere in style. With only one event remaining, she is more than 100 points clear of her nearest rival and so retains her title. "It's been the most successful weekend in my career so far," she said.

GRAND PRIX cars are to be fitted with aircraft-style "black boxes" from the start of the 1997 season in an attempt to remove any doubt about the cause of accidents. Max Mosley, president of the international governing body Fia, who announced the move last week, said that the system would be used only to gather data in the event of an accident and not for apportioning blame after collisions.

IVA MAJOLI of Croatia crushed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-4, 6-1 to grab the Pan Pacific Open women's indoor title in Tokyo. The 18-year-old took just 72 minutes to add Sanchez Vicario's scalp to that of Monica Seles, whom she defeated 1-6, 7-6, 6-4 in the quarter-finals.

TRAINER Peter McEllhiney collapsed and died after his boxer, Derek Wormald, lost the European middleweight title fight against Richie Woodhall in Birmingham. Woodhall, aged 27, from Telford, halted Wormald in the 10th round. McEllhiney collapsed at ringside and died in hospital.

CRISS-CROSSING the pitch with the under-12 football team at Aleoric School in Wiltshire is causing a few problems to coach Peter Mowday. His touchline shout, "Come on, it's yours, Chris," brings an instant response from all 11 players — for each of them is called Chris. The coincidence, however, does not end there. Even the substitute answers to the name of Chris.

